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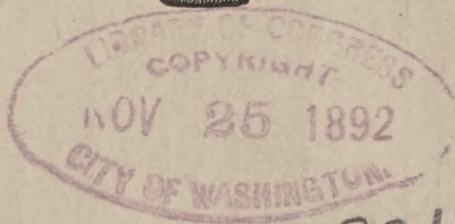


My poor mistress was quite blind.

“VIC”

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FOX-TERRIER.

BY
MARIE MORE MARSH.



32190x1

CHICAGO:

F. J. SCHULTE & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
The Ariel Press,
298 DEARBORN STREET.

(1892)

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TO MY
YOUNG COUSINS,
Rob, John and Marjorie,
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.



VIC. (*From a Photograph.*)

“VIC”: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I.

I WAS born in an empty room at the back of a saloon. Almost the first thing that I can distinctly recollect is the sharp pain of a knife cutting through my tail, and a man's voice saying:

“Dere, now, dey bees docked in de most approved style. And say, Mack, I'll take my pay for de job in drinks — see?”

I did not have my eyes open then, and I could not see the man who spoke, but I shall always remember his harsh voice and the brutal laugh which he gave when I squealed out with the pain.

We were a large family of pups,—seven in all,—and mother was very proud of us. Our master was kind, and he gave us fresh

straw twice each day, and saw that we were well fed and comfortable; and, although I have since learned that it was his business to make brutes of men, I can vouch for the fact that he knew how to treat animals well.

I remember when I first opened my eyes. The room in which we were looked very large, and I was afraid and hung close to mother until I had become quite used to it. Soon, however, I became very bold and would run about, even to the farthest corner; but the least strange sound would make me scamper back in a hurry, I can tell you.

I was the least shy and timid, and the rest of the puppies followed in my lead. "Pooh," I would say, "look at me!" And I would run boldly out into the room and bark in my shrill puppy voice; and one by one the others would join me; then we would run back to mother, pell-mell, as though we were frightened at the sound of our own voices.

Once, in playing about among the lumber

in the room, we upset a window-screen which had been placed on end against the wall. I never shall forget how terrified we were. We all hid under a box, fearing even to look out, and it was some time before we dared to run across to where mother was. Our hearts were beating at a frightful rate, and we rushed helter-skelter, without any idea except to get away from the thing which terrified us. Some of us ran into chairs and against the wall in our mad haste; and mother laughed and called us foolish and timid; and, although she explained there was nothing to be afraid of, we avoided that part of the room for several days.

I was larger than the rest, and very strong for my age. Mother said that I was a wonderfully forward puppy, and she seemed to depend upon me more than upon the others. One of my brothers was a weak, puny little fellow. He was the smallest of all and the most easily frightened. He was my favorite,

and I took almost as much care of him as mother did. When the others played too roughly, he used to run to me, for he could not stand it to be tumbled about like the rest. He did not grow fat and strong as the rest of us did, and master used to give him extra food, fearing that he did not get sufficient nourishment.

One day our master came into the room, bringing some men with him. We looked very sleek and fat,—all except the one little fellow,—and master seemed proud to show us. We had become used to having men about by this time; so we were not shy, and we ran about under their feet and nipped at the bottom of master's trouser-legs with our sharp little teeth.

Master called the men “boys.” They were all large like master, and, except one, they had gray hair and were of middle age. This one had black hair and a black mustache and red cheeks; his voice was very kind, and

when he stooped down and said: “Come, little fellows,” we all ran to him, even sick, timid little brother, who had nestled close to mother until he spoke.

The young man patted us and spoke kindly to us, and then he took me up and looked me over. “She’s the best of the whole lot,” he said; and the other men crowded around him while he explained to them my good points. He said that my ears were set just right and that my jaw was strong and my shoulders and front legs were superb. Then he praised my feet, and said that I had a capital coat, and that he liked my marking better than that of the others.

Then he set me down and said to my master: “I’ll take this one, Mack, when she’s old enough to take away.” I noticed that when he said this, mother put her tail between her legs and slunk away behind a barrel; but I did not understand what it all meant then, and, besides, I was so pleased at

being praised that I could think of little else.

The men talked more about us then, and they all said that they liked the breed; and one man, with a purple face and a white mustache, and bold, staring eyes, laughed and said to the young man: "How'd you come to pick the one with black markings, Jim? We thought you liked strawberry blondes." The men laughed at this, for, you see, we were all white, and I had black and tan markings upon my head, while some of the rest were marked with orange or chestnut.

The man whom they called Jim smiled a little, but he made no reply. He was leaning down to look at my sick brother, and I saw that his cheeks were redder than before. He took up the poor, thin little fellow, and held him very tenderly.

"Mack," said he, "this pup needs a tonic. You ought to give him a little quinine and iron."

“Yes,” answered my master, “I’ve been watching him. I’ll fix him up a dose that will set him up all right.” And then they all went out.

After they left I went to look for mother. She was still hidden behind the barrel, and when we playfully jumped about and bit her legs, she hardly noticed us. We tried to get her to pay us some attention, but when she came out at last she went over to our corner and lay down, and was so sad and still that we were half afraid, and we were sobered in an instant.

I lay down close beside her and licked her face and paws, and she drew a long, quivering breath like a sigh, and laid her head across my neck. Then she told me that it meant that when I was a little older I would be taken away from her and sent out into the world. I only half understood what she told me, and I was sad more because I saw that she was grieved than from any feeling of my

own, for it all seemed so far off and so vague.

I asked mother what the men had meant when they spoke of our breed, and she said: "Why, you silly little thing, didn't you know that you were a Fox Terrier and one of the best-bred dogs in the country?" After that I felt very proud, and can you wonder that I held my head a little higher for knowing that I was a thoroughbred?

My puny little brother did not gain in strength, and he shivered and whined all the time; so soon our master brought some hot, dark stuff in a tumbler and made him drink it all. It was very strong and had an unpleasant smell, and mother said that it was whisky.

The poor little fellow strangled and choked over it and cried because it burned his throat. I said that it was cruel of master, but mother said that he did not mean it unkindly, only he was so used to

seeing men gulp down the bitter stuff that it did not occur to him that it was strong medicine for a puppy.

After master went away, brother moaned with pain and cried that he was burning inside. He rolled from side to side in his agony, while mother and I licked him and tried to soothe his pain. After a time he stopped crying and lay quite still. I was glad because I thought that he would soon be well; but mother shook her head. Soon he stretched out his little legs and grew very stiff and cold, and then mother said that he was dead.

The rest of the puppies were frightened, and ran and huddled in a corner; but mother and I stayed near him, and I tried to warm his cold body by lying close to him. When master came back to find how the medicine was doing its work, he seemed surprised to find that my brother was dead. He carried him away then, and we never saw him again.

My other brothers and sisters were still afraid, and they would only come and sniff about the straw where our brother had lain, then they would run and hide. It was only after master had brought fresh, new bedding that mother could coax them into our corner at all. All this seemed heartless to me, but mother told me that it was natural for animals to fly from those of their kind which are diseased or dead, and that only a few can overcome this natural instinct of fear.

Mother grieved over our brother's death, and grew thin and ill herself, but master did not try any of his own medicine upon her. He sent for a veterinary surgeon, a kind man, who understood her case exactly, and who gave her just the drugs which she needed, and she began to mend at once.

One day the young man who mother said was to be my master came again to see me. He petted me and spoke gently to me, and I loved him from the first. Mother said that

she felt better about my leaving her, since I was to live with him, for she could see that he was kind and would treat me well. He came quite frequently after this, and sometimes he brought his friends, that he might show me off to them. He seemed proud because I knew him and would run to him when he called my name; for he had told master that I was to be called “Vic.”

He brought a lady to see me once—a tall blonde lady with blue eyes and reddish hair, just the color of my sister’s ears. The lady did not come in, but sat in a carriage a few doors off, and my new master carried me out to her. My master said that this lady was to be my mistress, and he whispered in my ear that I must love her very much, because he loved her better than his own life, and that in a few months he was to marry her, and then we three were to live together, and to be very, very happy.

All this he whispered as he held me close

up to his cheek on our way to the carriage. And I wagged my tail and licked his ear, which meant that I would try to do just what he wished.

But when I saw her who was to be my mistress, I felt that, although she was very beautiful, yet, somehow, it would be hard to love her. I could see at once that she disliked dogs, for she said, when she saw us: "Oh, Jim, how can you endure having that horrid beast so close to your face?"

When master held me up for her to see, she said that I was an ugly little brute, and that I looked for all the world like a guinea-pig. Master laughed at this, although it did not seem at all funny to me, and he said: "Look at her tail. It's docked, you know. I'm not just sure that I like it so, but fashion decrees it."

And the lady said: "Why, do you know, that's the only thing that I like about the creature. That looks so stylish."

Then master stroked my head softly and said, “I think that her eyes are her chief charm—they look so true.”

When I told mother what the lady had said, she sighed, and said that she feared that my master would suffer through her.

If I say but little about my brothers and sisters, it is not because I was not fond of them, but because there is little to tell that would be of interest here. We were a healthy, happy lot of pups, and we played, frolicked and slept after the manner of all pups the world over. Each had his own characteristics, and doubtless each could tell a story as varied and interesting as my own; but alas! never since the day I left them have I heard any news of one of them.

It was a mild day when my new master came to take me away. I had heard my old master tell the bar-tender that we were now old enough to leave mother. The other pups had been sold, all except one, which

was to be left with mother, but none of the owners had sent for them yet, and we were still an unbroken family.

I had hoped that I might be taken first, for it seemed that I could not bear to see the others go, one by one. One day I heard a voice call to the boy who ran errands about the place. "Go fetch Jim's pup. You know which it is—the white one with black ears." I knew then that my time had come.

Mother hid herself again behind the barrel, and would not be coaxed out, and my own heart was very heavy. I trembled with excitement, and I ran and tried to crowd in beside mother; but when I heard my master's voice call out, "No, Mack, never mind; I'll get her myself," I turned and ran to him instead.

He took me in his arms and patted me, and then he stooped down and stroked mother's back, reaching behind the barrel to get at her.

“Poor little mother! it *is* hard to let them go, isn’t it?” he whispered, softly.

I know that mother heard, for she turned and licked his hand, although she would not come out from the dark corner; and, when she whined mournfully, I looked into my master’s eyes, and saw that there were tears there.

I had been too frightened to notice it before, but now I saw that my master was thin, and that his cheeks were no longer red, but pale, and that the happy, joyous light had gone from his eyes.

He slipped me into the pocket of his great-coat, and gave mother another sympathetic pat, and then we went away from the big empty room forever.

II.

IT was in a large office that master fished me out of his pocket and set me, half dead with fright, down upon a desk. There were several men writing at other desks about the room, and they all looked up and greeted my master, and the most of them left their places and came to look at me. I was far too badly frightened to stand, and I sank down in a pitiful little heap. When the men went back to their work I mustered up courage to look at the man to whom my master was talking in low tones.

He was a young man with a kind, pleasant face and near-sighted gray eyes. His clothes were not fine like my master's, but were worn and shiny at the seams. Although he

was not handsome like Jim, his was a good face, and one that you could trust.

As I looked from one face to the other and listened to the low hum of their voices, I began to pay attention to what they were saying, and to my great surprise I learned that I was not to go home with Jim, after all, but that the pleasant-faced stranger was to be my master instead.

I could not help a pang of regret, for I had loved Jim dearly from my first remembrance, and this kind-looking, gray-eyed man could not take his place in my heart at once.

Soon their conversation was ended. "Well, old fellow, good-by. Take good care of Vic. I'll run out and see how she gets on once in a while," said Jim. Then he leaned down and gave me a little squeeze, and I licked his wrist, and that was our good-by, for I never saw Jim again.

After Jim went out my master fixed a soft little nest for me in the waste-basket under

his desk. Occasionally he reached his long, bony hand down and stroked my head as he wrote; and after a time I poked my nose between his fingers to show that I appreciated his friendliness.

Then I fell into a doze from weariness, and I slept for some time, when I was awakened by the words, "Jim's looking mighty bad." My master responded: "Yes, he's awfully cut up. She threw him over at the last minute, you know." "So she did the others. He'll get over it," said the other voice; but master replied: "I don't know. Jim isn't like the most of men. That sort of thing means more to him." Then I knew that they were talking of the beautiful blonde lady, and I understood why I was to have another master.

It was evident that I was expected at my new home, for when my master unlocked the lower hall door of the flat where he lived, a sweet voice called down: "Did you bring

it, dear?” And when master replied that he had “it” in his overcoat pocket, I knew that they were speaking of me.

Master ran up-stairs, two steps at a time, and caught a little brown-haired woman in his arms with a kiss, saying: “Well, wifie, I have brought you something to keep you company all day.” Then he took me out of his pocket, and put me down on the hearth-rug, telling her not to pay me much attention until I got a little used to things, because I was very shy and timid.

The little lady sat down beside me, and said: “Poor little doggy, don’t be afraid,” in a soft, low voice, and I got up and went over to her and climbed into her lap, for I wished her to see that I really was not so timid as my master had thought.

In a few days I was quite at home in my new quarters, and ran from room to room without fear.

My mistress kept no servant, but did all

except the heavy work herself, and master used to help her when he came home at night. They were very happy, and used to sing at their work, and they laughed and joked a great deal about their poverty, as they called it.

Although they were not very poor, I knew they were far from being rich, and they used to speak often of a debt, for the payment of which they were saving all that they could of master's salary. Master's name was John, and my mistress was named Dorothy, but he called her Dolly.

Sometimes, when she looked at his shabby coat or his threadbare trousers, Dolly would give a little sigh, and say: "Oh, my poor Cheap John!" And he would laugh and catch her up in his arms, and say that he didn't mind being poor or shabby, only for her sake. And then they would kiss each other, and, somehow, I always loved them better than ever when they talked like that.

I used to be very proud to go out with my mistress, and they all said that it was quite wonderful to see how quickly I learned to follow. But really I couldn't help following Dolly, for she was so sweet and good that I liked to be near her all the time. She used to take me with her when she went to market and upon errands that were not far from home, and I kept close at her heels all of the time. I got so that I soon knew all the tradespeople about, and the butcher used to throw me a bone each morning in a very friendly way.

One day I was trotting along behind my mistress, when she met a lady of her acquaintance and stopped to speak to her. They chatted for a long time, and I waited patiently for them to finish. The streets were somewhat crowded, and I got pushed about by the people who passed. Sometimes I was jostled in one direction and sometimes in another, until at last I found

myself at a corner. Looking up the street, I saw a strange animal with glaring green eyes, and fur that stood erect on his back, advancing toward me. Of course I knew that it was a cat, for I had seen cats from the windows ; but I had never been near to one before, and I felt some curiosity to see what they were really like. So I ventured a step nearer, when, p-s-s-s-t ! the thing sprang at me.

I dodged just in time, and the creature went over my head ; but I turned in a flash, and before he had time to spring again I had him by the back of the neck. He twisted himself about and buried his fore-claws in my head, while with his hind-claws he kicked and scratched me. We rolled over and over, biting and scratching each other wherever we could, until I was forced to let go for an instant for breath. The smart of my wounds filled me with fresh zeal, and in an instant I was at him again and caught him this time squarely

on the back. I shook him furiously until he ceased to struggle and dropped limp from my jaws. Then a voice yelled out, “Bully for de tarrier! Ain’t she gamey, dough? Youse catch her an’ hold ’er while I gets anoder cat.” I only stopped long enough to discover two small boys clambering over the high board fence, back of the corner grocery, and then I ran as fast as my legs could carry me, I knew not whither.

My only object was to get away from the boys; so I ran around a corner and into an alley, then across a vacant lot and into another street before I realized that one eye was swollen shut and that my face and ears were scratched and bleeding; then—worse than all—I knew that I was lost.

One foot had been bitten and was too sore to step upon, and I was wet and dirty from rolling in the mud. When I limped up to a puddle of water to drink, I was sickened at the reflection which met my eyes, and I

doubted if my mistress would know me if she should see me.

Tired and lame, I wandered about, up one street and down another, following some of the passers-by and running from others, until it was quite dusk ; then I sank, exhausted, upon the sidewalk, believing that I must die there.



III.

IT must have been in an unfrequented street that I dropped down, for I lay for some time without seeing a person pass ; then I heard a slow, ambling tread, and I tried to drag myself out of the way of an old woman with a huge milk-can in her hand. I could not stir, but I cried out with pain from the effort which I made, and the woman stopped and set her can down and carefully lifted me up. " It'll kape the bye company," she said, half-aloud, as she took up the can and trudged on.

It was nice and warm under her shawl, and she held me very tenderly ; but I could feel that her hands were hard and knotted, not soft and smooth like Dolly's.

When she came to a little shanty in an unpaved street she stopped, and set the can

down once more while she fumbled at the door. There was a noise within of a wooden bar moving, and a shrill little voice piped out, "The dure's unlocked. Youse can walk in." And in we went.

It was a tiny little room which we entered, and there was another smaller one off from that, and a loft up above. There was not much furniture ; a cupboard, a stove, a table, two chairs, and a narrow little cot in the front room, and a bed in the little room beyond. This much I saw with one glance, and then my whole attention was turned to the cot, for there, bolstered by pillows and rolled-up quilts, lay a little lad of about twelve years of age. His white little face was drawn with pain, and there was an ugly lump between his shoulders.

Overhead, and within reach of his hand, there hung from the ceiling a rope, which was attached to a clever device for raising and lowering a wooden bar which fastened

the outer door at the other side of the room. It was the rattling of this bar which we had heard when he bade us enter.

“See, Dinny, love, the poor sufferin’ baste I’ve brought to yez this time. He sat mopin’ on the sidewalk, an’ I most desthroyed him wid my big fate, an’ him niver complainin’ a wurrud. So I fetched him along wid me, an’ youse can docther him up a bit.”

“Oh, Granny, see the leg of him! He bees terrible hurted; mebbby the leg do be broke.” Then, with great care, the boy felt of my lame leg, discovering with joy that the injury was not so serious as he had feared. “Wese will have him around in no time, Granny; an’ let’s call him Toby,” he piped out; and the old woman laughed and said that would be a fine name.

Dinny washed my bruises with warm water, and his grandmother poured out a cup of milk and held it while I drank; then

she laid me down on a pile of rags, and I slept until the next morning.

When I awoke I could not think, for a moment, where I was, but when I remembered the events of the day before, I knew, and I felt ashamed and sorry. I wondered if I ever should see my dear master and mistress again. I knew that I did not deserve to.

My new friends were very kind to me. During the day the old woman used to go out to scrub or clean house, and each morning and evening she carried milk to her customers. While she was gone I stayed with the sick boy. Dinny was very fond of me, and he taught me to sit up and to roll over, and many other tricks which are really very easily done when one knows how; but at first I could not understand what he wished me to do, for nobody had ever made me do anything like that before.

He was very patient with me, though, and

never scolded or struck me when I did the wrong thing; and soon I could walk about upon my hind feet, "quite as proud as a policeman," as Granny said.

One day a doctor came to see Dinny. He was a stranger, but a friend of his had told him about the little lad, and he came to see if there was not some way of making him more comfortable. He examined the poor crooked shoulders and listened to the fluttering little heart, and then he said that while he could not promise to make Dinny straight and tall, he could, by sending him to a hospital for a time, make him so well and strong that he could do something to help himself and not be a burden upon his grandmother. And when the doctor told him this the boy cried from pure joy.

Upon the very day of Dinny's wonderful good news a happy thing happened to me, for as I stood at the window looking out I saw my mistress pass the house. I

scratched at the window and barked so loudly that she looked up and recognized me at once. She ran up the walk and knocked, and Dinny pulled up the bar and opened the door; but she caught me up in her arms and gave me a hug before she came into the house at all.

She explained her errand, and Dinny told her how his grandmother had found me, half-dead, in the street, and had brought me home under her shawl. Then my mistress told Dinny how much she had missed me, and what a relief it was to find me safe; for she had feared that I had met with rough usage somewhere. And all this time I stood with my ears and tail drooping, because I remembered how foolishly I had acted. But my mistress spoke no word of blame; and now that I think of it, I don't believe that she ever knew a thing about that cat, for there was nobody looking at us except the two small boys behind the fence.

And in a few moments Dinny told my mistress of his good news, for the doctor had just gone, and his heart was full. And, laughing and crying all at once, he told her, in his shrill little voice, how he was going to be strong and well pretty soon, and then he would go out to work while his grandmother would have nothing to do but stay at home and keep house for him. My mistress listened earnestly to the little lad's story, and she laughed with him for the joy of it; but even as she smiled, I saw that there were tears in her beautiful eyes, and when we went away she kissed Dinny's forehead and then held me up so that he might give me a farewell squeeze.

I felt not a little sad at the thought of leaving Dinny and his grandmother, for they had become dear to me; but it was hard to be called Toby, and to be always spoken of as "him," and I was glad to hear my own name again.

Dolly carried me in her arms all the way home, although I had got to be quite a large dog by that time, and was no small load for her ; but she seemed afraid to trust me to run along beside her, after my last experience.

It was nearly dark when we got home, but I ran all through the rooms before the gas was lit, sniffing about the familiar chairs and rugs, and even remembering to hunt up a beautiful smooth, clean bone which I had hidden weeks before behind the cushions of the lounge. I dug it out while Dolly was busy getting supper, and she gave a little squeal of surprise when I carried it out into the kitchen to gnaw.

Before it was time for master to come Dolly shut me in a closet, that he might not see me at first, for she wanted to surprise him. But when he came and opened the closet door to get his slippers I surprised

them both, for I walked out on my hind feet, just as Dinny had taught me to do.

This trick delighted them, and they gave me lumps of sugar and made me do it over and again ; and finally they called the lady in the next flat to come and see what I had learned to do. When she came in, I not only walked, but sat up and rolled over as well. My mistress said that Dinny must have taught me. And then she told them the story of the poor little Irish boy, while I munched lumps of sugar and thought what a wonderful dog I had become.



IV.

I COULD see that things had been going pretty well with them during my absence, for there were two new chairs in the dining-room and a lot of new books. It was a standing joke between them that, whenever there was any money to spend, Dolly bought chairs and John bought books. They used to laugh and say that it would be the happiest moment of Dolly's life when she could set the table for a company of ten without having to bring out the parlor and bed-room chairs.

Soon things settled down into the old ways, and I was trusted to go about with Dolly just as I had done before. The butcher had not forgotten me, and my old friends greeted me with kind words, and Dolly was congratulated on getting me back, while really it was I to whom congratulations were due.



I surprised them both.

One night John came home looking very sad, and when he kissed Dolly he said: “Well, dear, poor Jim’s gone.” Then they both cried a little, and I knew that Jim was dead.

My mistress was very much excited as they talked of his death. She said: “They may call it a fever if they like, John, but that man died of a broken heart.” And my master said: “Yes, Dolly, I believe he did.” Then I swallowed hard and winked fast, and Dolly said, “Look, dear, Vic is crying too;” and my master laughed and said, “What nonsense!”

Something happened soon after this that made us all very unhappy. I could not quite understand about it myself, although they spoke of it very freely. It was some matter of business in which my master, through no fault of his own, lost the money which he had been trying to save and it put them in a very hard place.

Master worried over it, and Dolly used to laugh at him and kiss the frown away from his forehead, and call him her dear old Cheap John; but when he was away she used often to cry, herself, and I knew that she was quite as anxious as John was, only she joked and put a merry face upon the matter.

After a time master fell ill from the nervous strain and worry about his loss, and, as weeks passed, he did not seem to gain in health or strength. After awhile the new chairs, and soon some of the older furniture too, disappeared. I never knew where they went, only I saw Dolly go and hide behind the kitchen door after the man took them away, and she sobbed like a baby. But when John called her, in his weak voice, she dried her eyes quickly and went into the room laughing and with a funny joke on her tongue.

You see, there was the doctor to be paid

and the medicines to be bought, and I could see that my poor mistress was beside herself with anxiety. Some nights I was hungry when I went to bed, but I didn't mind that for myself, only I knew that when I was hungry poor, tired Dolly was hungry too, for she always divided her supper with me.

The men who worked in the same office with my master were very kind, but they were all poor themselves, and rents and provisions were very high that winter.

One day a queer man came to see my master. He was a round, roly-poly man, with fat cheeks and merry, twinkling eyes, and a nose so round that his glasses kept falling off. He had a loud voice, too, and talked a great deal. I heard my master call him Mr. Doyd, and then I remembered that I had heard them tell many funny things about him, and that they used to laugh whenever his name was mentioned.

He was what my master called "sporty."

He wore trousers of a large plaid, and a red necktie, and he talked a great deal about horses and dogs. I knew then that he was the man whom Dolly had laughed about once because he had called his twin babies "litter sisters," and said that their "muzzles were too short for beauty."

I could see that Mr. Doyd had come upon some business errand. He asked John just exactly how things stood with them, and John looked pleadingly at his wife. Dolly couldn't even muster up a smile this time, but got up and went out of the room, and I followed after her.

I think that my master must have told Mr. Doyd that things were about as bad as they could be, for when we went back he was saying "Tut! tut!" in a husky voice, and wiping his glasses as hard as he could. When he caught sight of me he made a grab at me, saying, "Hello! where'd ye get this?" and he turned me around and looked at me

critically. Then there was some talk about a bench-show, and the puppy-class, and the all-age stake, and a lot of stuff which was new to me, and meant nothing at all.

After Mr. Doyd left, master called me to him and put his thin hands upon my head and looked straight into my eyes. “Vic, old girl, it seems like betraying a friend, but we’ve got to sell you,” he said; then he broke down completely and cried and put his arm about my neck and patted my head as he held me close up against his cheek.

Mr. Doyd came the next day and took me away. Dolly ran and hid when she heard him coming, and I couldn’t help thinking of how mother had hid when Jim came to take me from her. Dolly did not need to say good-by to me, for she had held me in her arms and cried over me half the night, and I had put my nose into her hand and wagged my tail slowly and tried to make her see that I understood.

V.

IT was a great, cold, bare-looking building to which Mr. Doyd took me, and there were more dogs in it than I had supposed that there were in the whole world. But, then, I had limited ideas, or I would have known that fifteen hundred dogs was but a small proportion of the canine population of the earth.

There were dogs of all sizes, ages and breeds, each in his little square pen, or stall, and the benches were placed in long rows throughout the entire length of the building. Soon a man put me into one of the pens, and tacked a card upon it. The card showed that I, Vic, had been formally entered in the Puppy Class of Smooth-coated Fox-Terriers, in the Third Annual Dog Show held by the Disgruntled Kennel Club of the Northwest,

and that my number was 36. And below that were these ominous words: “For Sale.”

The straw of my bed was fresh and clean, but it was not like my cushion by Dolly’s chair, and I could not turn about without getting tangled up in my chain. The aisles were very dirty, and, as many of the ladies who came to see us wore long, trailing dresses which swept along after them, the dust was kept stirring constantly, and it filled the air with a dense cloud which irritated our noses and throats and made our eyes water.

Occasionally a man would walk about and sprinkle the floor with some disinfectant, which was used so plentifully that it ran in black rivulets or stood in inky puddles in the hollows of the boards. The ladies who passed through the aisles at these times had to hold up their gowns and pick their way about very carefully, as they would do upon a muddy street-crossing.

The attendants were kind enough, but I missed the touch of my master's thin hand and the sound of my mistress' sweet voice.

The food was good, and there was enough of it, but I was too homesick to eat, and the barking of the dogs made my head confused and dizzy.

It was all so strange and exciting that I did not realize how tired I was until the visitors had gone and the place was shut up for the night. Then I would have slept if I could, but the light and noise were so unusual that even my fatigue did not bring slumber to my eyes.

Some of the dogs slept as calmly as though they were at home, while others were barking and yelping almost continually. At times there would be a lull for a few moments, then some poor, frightened dog would howl dismally and tug at his chain, and that would start the clamor once more.

Across the aisle from where we fox-ter-

riers were benched, were the Dachshunde, queer-shaped little creatures, with long bodies and bow-legs and sad-looking faces, framed by great, drooping ears. I had excellent eyesight, and when I found sleep out of the question I interested myself by trying to make out some of the names upon the stalls opposite me. The one directly across was a funny Dutch name. I spelled it over three times before I could make anything of it. It was “Mevrou,” and it belonged to a sad-faced little chocolate-and-tan foreigner, who looked very lonesome and homesick and quite as though she were going to cry.

I looked very steadily at her, for I wished to make her look at me. At last she did so, with such a pleading, sorrowful look in her eyes that I forgot my own loneliness in my pity for her. I thought that it might amuse her to see me sit up; so I did that, and then I rolled over, but I got entangled in my chain and nearly strangled myself. And just then

an attendant, who was patrolling the building, came by, and he straightened me out and hit me with a stick, and told me to lie still, in a very stern, cross manner. I was almost afraid to move after that; but when I looked across the aisle again, the little Dachs-hund wagged her tail and seemed to know that I had meant well by my performance.

The stall next to mine upon the right was vacant, but the dog upon my left was a very nice, friendly sort of fellow, and extremely talkative, so that I learned from him a great many things which I never would have found out by myself.

He had been at this same show the year before, and he pointed out the judges, whom he recognized by their badges, and some of the prize-winners of the last year.

He was not homesick, and did not feel at all nervous, because he had grown used to that sort of thing. His master had shown him at every bench-show in the country for

three years, and always with the same results — each verdict called forth an abusive letter to the judges, and one of complaint to some sporting journal.

He told me that it was all foolishness for his master to expect to win a prize with him, because, although his pedigree was faultless, and he had some good points, still he was far too short in head, and very leggy, and bad behind.

Indeed, my friend found more than a little fault with his master for bringing him there and subjecting him to all the discomforts of the place, as well as the mortification of being severely criticised by the judges and beaten by most of the dogs in his class. He belonged to another class of terriers than mine, and was a wire-haired dog, so we were not taken out to be judged together, as I had hoped that we would be.

I was badly frightened when I found myself in a large inclosed space with a few

other dogs ; for our class was small that year. The men who decided upon our merits were kind and gentle with us ; and when the set of my ears and my straight forelegs found favor in their eyes, I thought of how Jim had praised my points to his friend. And then my thoughts wandered to poor, sick John and anxious little Dolly. I think I must have shown my sadness, for one of the judges patted my head and said : "Brace up, old girl !" And I did brace up, and carried my tail straight up, and pricked up my ears ; and in a few minutes I was taken back to my stall, and a man came and tied a blue ribbon to my collar. Then my neighbor told me that I was a dog whose acquaintance should be cultivated, for I was a prize-winner.

Among the visitors at the show there was a young girl who seemed to be interested in dogs of every sort. She went from one to another, speaking a kind word to each. My

neighbor told me that he knew who she was. Her father, he said, was a rich man, and he had told her that she might buy any dog at the show, within reasonable bounds as to price, and now she was trying to select one.

I asked my friend what he considered “reasonable bounds,” and he answered, airily: “Oh, she wouldn’t consider two or three hundred dollars bad for a little fellow like me.” I looked at him to see if he was joking, but he looked sober enough, and to this day I can’t help laughing when I think of his disgusted look when I expressed surprise that he should be worth so much.

Then he said that he wished that the young lady would buy him, for he would love to have her for his mistress; but he added, with a sly look: “She will want a prize-winner, and I didn’t get even a V. H. C. I suppose master will write a letter to the judges to-morrow.” Then he told me that

poor little Mevrou had not taken any prize at all, because they said that she stood out at elbows and had not a long enough muzzle, although her peak and ears were good.

I looked across at Mevrou then, and tried to get her attention ; but she sat there looking sadder than ever, with her ears drooping to the ground and her eyes bent upon the floor ; and I could not make her raise her head or look at me at all.

Just then the young girl stopped before me. Her companion, a lady of middle age, put up an eye-glass, as if to examine me closely, but the girl herself caught me right up in her arms and hugged me close, saying: "Oh, auntie! this is the dearest one of all. I shall choose her." Then she read my card. "Vic is her name, auntie, and she is for sale." And after patting me and calling me a nice dog, the two women went away.

After they left, my rough-coated friend

said: “Upon my word, you are in luck, Vic. She won’t get you for nothing, either, for Mr. Doyd has marked up your price again, and it is now”—— But I won’t tell what he said, because I am rather modest, and it seems absurd that a little creature like me should command so large a price. Only I remember that I would not believe what he told me until I looked at the card myself, and then a little thrill of pride ran through me—pride that I could bring so much money to poor Dolly and her dear Cheap John.

My neighbor asked me if I had noticed a little silver cross at the throat of the young lady who was to be my mistress. I said that I had noticed it, and he began: “She wears that because she is a daughter of the King. She”—— But before he could say more an attendant came for me, and I was taken out and put into a carriage, right into the arms of my new mistress, and in another moment we were being whirled away.

I had never ridden in a carriage before. So far, the people with whom I had lived had either patronized the street-cars or gone on foot. It was luxurious to nestle against my new mistress' soft sealskin jacket and to be covered by the rich carriage-robles. Then I fell to wondering what the pretty young lady's name was, and presently her aunt said: "Why, Helen, we are home already. I was half asleep, weren't you?" And Helen replied, "No, auntie, I was thinking."

The carriage stopped before a great stone house, with "Heatherton" on the door-plate. Helen picked me up in her arms and ran up the steps and into a warm, dimly-lit hall; then she went up another flight of stairs and down a corridor into a cosy little pink-draped sitting-room, without ever stopping for breath until she dropped me among the soft cushions of a chintz lounge. Then she took off her hat and coat, tossed them onto

the table, and threw herself down beside me, saying, “Oh, Vic, how good it seems to get home.”



VI.

I COULD not tell Helen that, although it was very pleasant to be where it was so warm and quiet and comfortable, still that pretty room was not home to me yet.

I could see that she was fatigued, for she did not look strong, and soon her hand slipped off my head and her eyes closed, and I knew, by her regular breathing, that she was asleep. Then I began to look about the room, turning my head very carefully that I might not rouse her.

The walls were of a soft gray tint, with great pink flowers here and there upon them. There were pretty pink silk draperies at the windows, the sills of which were very broad and piled with great cushions. The polished floor was covered by a rich oriental rug, and a large gray bear-skin lay before the grate.

There were bowls of pink roses upon the mantel and table, and one was placed upon a bracket under a large oil portrait of a beautiful lady, with Helen's own brown eyes and hair, but with a more commanding grace and a prouder bearing.

I looked from the portrait to Helen's face as she lay there. Hers was smaller and darker and less perfect in outline than the pictured face, but there were the same sweet, tender mouth and straight dark brows, and I judged that the portrait was of Helen's mother.

There was a small white-wood writing-desk with silver handles in one corner of the room, and a low shelf of books stood between the windows. Upon a rattan table there was a careless litter of books and magazines. Near this, a bamboo cabinet with silver mountings held picturesque jugs, rare bits of thin china, some queer-shaped

plates and a couple of candlesticks—the general miscellany of a Japanese cabinet.

There were some photographs upon the mantel, some pretty girlish faces and an actor in Hamlet costume. Then beside the bowl of roses there was thrown, in a confused jumble, a collection of spoons—coffee spoons, egg spoons, pap spoons, apostle spoons, orange spoons—a bewildering lot of the daintiest trifles ever gotten together. Even with what I now know of the many vicissitudes of human life, I should say that there was no possible contingency for which Helen had not a spoon especially designed.

There were but few pictures upon the walls besides the portrait; and one that particularly pleased my fancy was a large photograph of a kind-faced mother-dog surrounded by her litter of puppies. The dogs were mastiffs—a large breed, as unlike us fox-terriers as they can possibly be. Still there was something in the expression of that

great dog's face which reminded me of my own mother and the empty room behind Mack's place, and I found myself swallowing hard at a big lump in my throat which felt as though it would choke me.

As I looked from one pretty thing to another, I thought how Dolly would have loved just such a room. Then, as my thoughts returned from Dolly, in her poor, bare flat, to the girl lying there, so unconscious of all her good fortune, I realized, for the first time, how unevenly the good things of this world are divided, and I felt a strange bitterness in my heart for a moment. Only for a moment, mind you, for then the sweet mouth smiled, as in some pleasant dream, and — well, you couldn't feel bitterly toward anything when Helen smiled.

The whole tone of Helen's room was soft and reposeful, suggesting, by its deep cushioned window-seats and low easy-chairs, rest and comfort. Wherever the eye rested there

was something beautiful to look at. There were no crude colors, no sharp contrasts. Everything was in quiet harmony ; and soon, overcome by the soothing influence of the warmth and quiet, the gray and pink tints blended into a delightful, soft, blurry mist, and I fell asleep beside my new mistress.

It was dark in the room when we awoke. Helen hurriedly lit the gas and looked at her watch. "Why, Vic, we slept a long time, didn't we? It's nearly dinner-time," said she, opening the door which led from the sitting-room into her bed-room, and disappearing from my view.

I could hear her as she moved about in the next room, but I did not quite dare to go in, although the door was ajar. So I poked my nose in at the crack, and sniffed loudly to attract her attention, and then she called me in.

There were the same beautiful, soft colors in the furnishings of this room, and every-

thing showed luxury and taste. I ran about investigating the corners and closets, while Helen hurried to dress, throwing down one gown and then another before she chose the one which she put on. Helen bent her head over the roses as she unfastened the neck of her street-gown, and something bright dropped and fell with a soft tinkle upon the surface of the hand-mirror. When she picked it up I saw it was the little silver cross, and I remembered that my gossipy friend at the dog show had told me that my new mistress was the daughter of a king. And, as I looked at her, she seemed to me to be invested with a new dignity, and I fancied that there was a proud turn to her head which had escaped my notice before.

Now, in my ignorance, I supposed that Helen's father was the ruler of this country, and it seemed to my simple mind that her surroundings quite befitted a princess. So, when, after she had dressed for dinner, she

went out, saying: "After awhile I'll come and get you, Vic, dear, and feed you and show you to papa," you may imagine that I was in a flutter of excited expectation. She came back in about an hour, and took me down to the kitchen and made the cook give me some dinner.

The cook was a large, vulgar-looking woman, but she seemed kind at heart, for she gave me a great plateful of meat and gravy, and stood watching me while I ate, meanwhile carrying on a spirited conversation with the coachman and the house-maid. They discussed my appearance far more critically and less favorably than the judges at the bench-show had done, and the coachman said that I looked like a cross between a rabbit and a goat. They all laughed immoderately at this, and agreed that he had just hit it in describing me.

And when my mistress came after me the cook said that they had been saying what

a beautiful little creature I was. After that I never liked nor trusted the cook.

I followed Helen up-stairs to the drawing-room, too frightened to look up, when she said: “See, papa! This is Vic. We have come to thank you for each other.” When I did raise my eyes I scarcely could believe my senses, for there stood the man with the purple face and white mustache and big, bold eyes—the man who had teased Jim about “strawberry blondes” when Dutch Mack brought the men to see us pups.

The recognition was mutual, for the man exclaimed: “Why, that’s one of Dutch Mack’s pups, as true as I live. Did you get her pedigree, Nell?” Helen told my sire’s name and that of my dam. “Sure, I wasn’t mistaken. Same pup Jim Farson picked out. Poor Jim!” muttered he.

When Helen took me back to her room she brought out from her closet a big, fancy basket, trimmed with many ribbons and

with numerous little pockets in the silken lining along the sides. She turned the basket upside down and emptied these receptacles of the thread, needles, embroidery silk and odds and ends which were tucked therein. Then she jammed a big silk cushion down into it and set it beside her bed, telling me that it was to be my own bed, and that I should go right to sleep.

I was glad that she turned down the gas when she went out, because I could think better in the dark, and I wanted to figure it out about the man down-stairs. I thought over it for a long time, and I came to the conclusion that this puffy-eyed man, with the coarse face, could not be a king, and that my neighbor had meant something else. But how a man like that could be Helen's father I could not understand at all. And, besides, I was very much puzzled about the silver cross.

VII.

I^N the course of time I became accustomed to my new home and was very happy there, although I never forgot John and Dolly, nor ceased to love them dearly. I was very fond of Helen. She was always good and kind to me ; and her laugh was the merriest, and her smile the sweetest of any that I have ever known. She was a little careless sometimes, but if she forgot and went away leaving me shut in her room without any dinner, she was so penitent and self-reproachful afterward, and she loaded me with such quantities of food and favors, that I could not feel any resentment toward her.

She had a way of tossing her wraps down wherever she took them off ; and then she would quite forget them until she wished to

go out again, when the servants would be sent running all over the house for Miss Helen's coat or Miss Helen's muff. But in most things she was rather thoughtful, for a girl of eighteen.

Helen's mother was dead, and her place was filled by Mrs. Litchfield, Helen's aunt, who,—although she had an aggravating way of looking at me through her eye-glasses and always spoke of me as "it,"—was really a kind and lovable woman. Helen's father was very good to me and he took a great deal of notice of me whenever I was in the drawing-room, but he hardly ever came up to Helen's room; and I was glad of it, for there was always an odor of tobacco and something stronger about him; and it seemed to me that he was out of place in that sweet rose-scented room.

One day Helen sat reading in her sitting-room, and I lay at her feet, when Mrs. Litchfield came in. She seemed deeply moved by

something, and she held an old-fashioned daguerreotype in her hand.

“Helen,” she said, “I have just been rummaging among your mother’s things in the attic, and I came across this old picture. It looks just as your father did when they were first engaged, and your mother always treasured it on that account.”

Helen took the picture eagerly. “Why, auntie, how handsome he was! and—auntie—it looks like you.” Mrs. Litchfield flushed at the pretty compliment, and Helen went on: “It doesn’t look a bit as he does now, does it, auntie? Why, auntie, what can have changed him so?”

There were tears in Mrs. Litchfield’s eyes, and Helen stopped. “There, there, I know, auntie, dear. It was mamma’s death and the worry, and—and—everything.” And Helen threw her arms around her aunt’s neck, and they cried softly together.

As they sat there, wrapped in each other’s

arms, the picture slipped from Helen's lap and fell at my feet. I looked curiously at it. At first I could see nothing more than my own reflection as in a mirror; then a ray of sunshine fell upon it, and I saw a strong, noble face with clear-cut features and frank eyes — a face no more like the one which I knew so well than Helen's was like the cook's.

I had often wondered how a beautiful woman like Helen's mother could have been attracted to such a man as Mr. Heatherton ; but after I saw the picture I knew. Then I fell to pondering upon the change and what could have made it. I thought of the first time I had seen him. I remembered the big room back of the saloon, and I recalled the same strong odor which I had noticed about him. Then more memories came to me — the indistinct clink of glasses in the bar-room ; my mother's master and "the boys"

— and then, like a flash, it dawned upon me that, if he chose, Dutch Mack could solve the problem of the change in Helen's father.



VIII.

I DISLIKED and distrusted both the coachman and the cook. But as Helen kept me with her at all times when she was at home, and shut me in her room when she went out, I saw but little of them except at meal-times. One day, however, when Helen had gone out with her aunt, the housemaid came softly into her room, and, after "shooing" me into a corner, caught me and covered me with her apron, and, sneaking down to the kitchen, delivered me over to the coachman. I had never had much of an opinion of the housemaid. She had seemed to me a very characterless sort of person, but perfectly harmless. When, then, she came crying "shoo" at me, as though I were a savage beast, I thought that she had gone clean out of her wits. Of course I did

not make any opposition to being caught by her, for no harm had ever come to me yet through any person, and I had perfect faith in everybody so far as my personal safety was concerned. So, when she told the cook, as she handed me to Robert, that she was nearly dead of fright lest I should bite her, I thought her the silliest person I had ever seen.

Robert led the way, with me in his arms, and the cook and housemaid followed down the walk to the barn. We all went inside, and Robert carefully locked the door; then the two women began to gather their gowns up from about their feet and to squeal and clamber upon some boxes which were there. I was very much interested in what was to come, for there was an air of expectation about the little party. So, when Robert handed me to the cook to hold, I followed his movements with my eyes, although she

held me so tightly that I could not turn my head.

Robert went to a corner and took a canvas bag up from the floor, disclosing a wire trap in which a small animal with a long, pointed nose, sharp, cruel-looking teeth and wicked, beady eyes, was running about. He bade cook let go her hold on me, and just then he opened the door of the trap and said "Rats-s-s!" The animal ran out and started to run from me, but I had caught it before it was half way across the floor, and with one shake I laid it dead at Robert's feet, with its backbone broken. The cook said that it was well done, but Robert insisted that I had killed it too quickly. He said that it was more fun when a dog worried the rat; and then, while he and the cook were having a spirited discussion about how a rat should be killed, the housemaid carried me back under her apron and put me where she had found me.

None of the family ever found out that I had been out of the room, and Helen never suspected that her orders had been disobeyed. So that it was not long before Robert, emboldened by his success, planned to have a trial of my mettle in something even more exciting. This time the housemaid carried me to the kitchen as before, and gave me into Robert's arms, but she and the cook did not follow us to the barn. The cook evidently disapproved of the affair, for she told Robert that she washed her hands of the whole thing; and she predicted that he would get himself into trouble and said that he needn't look to her to help him out.

We went into the same part of the barn that we had been in before, and Robert was even more careful this time to see that the door was securely fastened. There was a red-faced young man there, and he held by the collar the ugliest-looking pup that I

ever saw in my life. She was heavier and larger in every way than I, and so built that her legs looked as though they were put on at the four corners like the legs of a table; so far apart were they that I know that I could have crawled under her without touching them. The loose skin was wrinkled over her square muzzle, and the length from her nostrils to her lower jaw was enormous. I approached her in a very friendly spirit, sniffing curiously at her heels, when she turned, and, without the least provocation, snapped viciously at me, taking a chunk out of my ear. Roused by the pain, and resenting the indignity, I sprang and caught her by the throat, and held on, I can tell you. She was a muscular dog, and she shook herself powerfully and tried to throw me off, but I never loosened my hold. It was my first fight, and I was thoroughly excited. My jaws never tired; they were like a steel trap, and my grip never weakened. Every instinct

bade me hold on until the dog dropped at my feet. The red-faced man had stolen out with his master's bull-dog just as Robert had taken me. The men became fearful lest we dogs should be hurt, and thus betray them to their masters; so the other man made Robert loosen my jaws and free his dog, and then they both sneaked off down the alley, while Robert carried me into the kitchen, petting and calling me "Good dog." I think that Robert had never really liked me before that. The cook washed my wounds, muttering meanwhile, and prophesying trouble for them all on account of what she termed Robert's "pig-headedness."

When Helen saw the scar upon my ear, she was completely mystified. The housemaid denied that I had been from the room at all, and she declared that I must have cut myself on the fire-shovel which stood by the grate, saying that she had found it overturned upon the floor.

But Helen's father gave a roar of laughter when he heard this. "Why, the dog has been in a fight, Helen. Can't you see that her ear has been bitten through? I'll bet Robert has taken her out and matched her against some other dog around here. I'd like to have seen how the other dog fared. Sly boy, that Robert." And he roared again and acted as though his respect for me was much increased, now that I had seen a little of "life," as he called it.

But Helen was very angry. What seemed a good joke to her father was an insult to her; and although the servants denied all knowledge of any such thing, I think she suspected the truth, for she kept me closer by her than ever before. Whenever she pointed to my ear and said "Bad Vic!" I looked very sheepish and hung my head guiltily; but I knew that I had only defended myself and had not invited the attack, and I only wished that I could make her understand that too.

IX.

THE family went but little in society. Mr. Heatherton hated going out and said that it was all nonsense for a man to make a martyr of himself in a close, crowded drawing-room when he could be comfortable at his club. Helen was not very strong, and an occasional ball or party would leave her tired and exhausted for several days, during which time Mrs. Litchfield would load herself with reproaches for having urged the girl to go; for Helen cared but little for that sort of thing. So they lived in a very quiet manner. They sometimes entertained in a dull, formal sort of a way. At such times merry, laughing Helen was very stiff and prim, assuming quite as much dignity as Mrs. Litchfield herself.

Helen had one young friend of whom she

was very fond. She was a girl of her own age, the daughter of an old family friend. Kitty, as they called her, rejoiced in the stately baptismal name of Katherine Elizabeth, and she had a pedigree which was much longer than her bank account. But she was a bright, happy girl, notwithstanding the "reduced circumstances" of her family, which subject she was wont to joke about and to treat in a very light manner.

Kitty's mother, who had been for several years a widow, was an invalid and went out very little; so Kitty used to go about with Helen under Mrs. Litchfield's chaperonage.

Unlike Helen, Kitty loved parties and balls and all sorts of gayety, and she used to declare that if she had Helen's wardrobe and Helen had her physical strength, they would then be prepared to enjoy life as it should be enjoyed. Sometimes she laughingly told Helen that she fairly disliked her when she thought of all the good luck that came to her,

and she said that she felt quite like an anarchist when she saw Helen's jewels and lovely gowns. But in spite of her jokes and extravagant talk, Kitty was a dear, unselfish little girl, who loved Helen devotedly and didn't envy her a bit.

The two girls were together in Helens' sitting-room one day. Helen was training a vine, which had just been brought up from the green-house, over her mother's portrait. Kitty stood beside the mantel, idly tossing about the spoons which were heaped there, and seeming to enjoy the soft jingle which they made. "Helen," she asked, with sudden curiosity, "how many spoons have you here?"

"Thirty-five or forty, I guess; I don't just remember," answered Helen, without taking her attention from her work.

Kitty carefully counted the spoons one by one. "Do you know you are awfully careless to leave them about this way? It isn't

right to put temptation in the way of the servants," said she, as, after counting them once, she carefully repeated the count. "Helen," she said, gravely, "are you sure that you had thirty-five or forty spoons?"

"Why, yes," said Helen, glancing up with a look of surprise; "I counted them once last month for auntie. There were—let me think—there were thirty-eight, I am sure. Why?"

"Well," said Kitty, "there are just thirty-one spoons here now."

Helen dropped her vine and came across to the mantel. She counted the spoons as carefully as Kitty had done.

"Why, my prettiest coffee-spoon is gone, and that dear little inlaid Russian tea-spoon, and the one I got in San Francisco, and the one that Cousin Clara sent me from Venice, and—— Why, Kitty, somebody must have stolen them." And Helen looked very grave indeed.

“Well, I should say that somebody had,” said Kitty, severely, “and it really serves you right for being so careless.”

“But who could have taken them? The servants are all honest, I am sure,” said Helen, perplexed.

“Well, who of the servants comes in here?” asked Kitty.

“None except Susan, the housemaid, have any business in here.” And Helen went slowly down to find her aunt.

Of course, the housemaid denied it all at first, but Mrs. Litchfield talked long and earnestly with her, and at last the girl brought out the missing spoons, all except one—that one she tearfully confessed that she had sold.

Mrs. Litchfield brought the spoons back and placed them with the others upon the mantel. There were tears of pity, not of anger, in Helen’s eyes, as, with one movement, she swept the glittering pile into the

skirt of her gown and carried them to the safe for her aunt to lock up with the rest of the silver.

"Now, Helen, you might get a case made for them, a show-case like those in jewelers' stores, with a glass cover and a lock and key; then you could see your treasures, and keep them, too," said Kitty, roguishly.

But Helen replied, sadly: "No, there is no more fun in spoons for me now. I don't want to have things which need to be watched."

The housemaid made a very touching story of it all, but she was discharged. When she came to say good-by to her young mistress, Helen was out of the room. Mrs. Litchfield bade the girl go in and wait for her, and as she stood there alone her eyes fell upon me. "You nasty, pampered little beast!" said she, kicking spitefully at me with her foot. "It is all your fault, but I'll get even with you yet. You needn't think

you'll always be laying 'round on silk cushions while poor people has to work for a living. You ain't seen the last of me yet, you ugly little cur." Then she raised her hand to strike me. I never had been struck in my life, and I did then as any other dog would do—I showed my teeth threateningly, and her hand fell without striking the blow.

When Helen came, Susan wept and told a touching tale of poverty and temptation, and how at last she had yielded because her mother was ill and needed the money for medicines. Helen talked long and earnestly to her. Drawing Susan's attention to the little cross which hung at her throat and which had so mystified me, Helen explained how she, with nine other girls among her friends, had formed a little band, pledging themselves to help those who were unfortunate or in trouble; how they called themselves Daughters of the King, and they tried always to be thoughtful and kind and ten-

der and forgiving, harboring no resentment toward those who would injure them, because they were all—whether sinned against or sinning—the children of one kind Father who was King over all. And then Helen told her that whenever she saw one of the little silver crosses, Susan was to look upon the wearer as a friend; for the badge was meant to show a willingness to help others.

I listened intently to the conversation, and I was glad to know at last the meaning of the emblem which had puzzled me for so long.

Before the girl left, Helen gave her a gold-piece to take to her mother, and bade her leave her address, so that they might know where to find her. Susan professed to be quite heart-broken at leaving so kind a mistress, and in a wheedling tone she declared that she should miss me sadly—"the dear little creature that I love like it was a baby,"

she said, tearfully. Helen held me toward the girl that I might receive a parting caress, but I drew away from the outstretched hand and growled.

"Why, Vic! what can be the matter?" said my mistress. "I am sure that I never knew her to act so before."

"Oh, it's nothing, Miss," said Susan, fawningly. "She don't want to be disturbed, perhaps. She loves me dearly, Vic does, for I'm her good friend."

Then Susan went away, and after she was gone it was discovered that there were a number of things missing; so Mrs. Litchfield and Helen went immediately to the address which she had left. But there was no house there at all — only a vacant lot.

And that evening, in the drawing-room, the ladies told Mr. Heatherton the whole story, and Helen finished by telling how I had growled at the girl. He laughed long and heartily, as though it were not sad at all,

but quite the funniest thing in the world. And he teased Helen for being so easily imposed upon, and praised my intuition, for he said that I could tell a dishonest person by instinct.

Somehow his talk grated upon me, and I caught myself wishing that Helen's father did not laugh so noisily and so often, for it made him appear very foolish.



X.

AFTER this, life ran along very smoothly in the great, pleasant house. The new maid who took Susan's place was a fresh-faced little creature with a small, trim waist and a coquettish set to her caps. There was a pleasant rustle to her neat, crisply-starched skirts, and there was about her an agreeable something, more invigorating than restful, perhaps ; but it really seemed good to see her bustling about and to hear the energetic click of her high heels. She was a clean, wholesome body, and underneath all her artificial little vanities there was something honest and true, and I always liked her. She had a pleasing little touch of Irish brogue, and Helen used to wonder if she really had been christened Bettine.

The year which had passed since Helen

brought me home seemed short, and it had brought no great changes to the family. Helen looked stronger and more robust than at first, but there was a troubled expression upon her face at times. Mrs. Litchfield had grown anxious-looking and careworn, but Helen's father laughed louder and oftener than ever before.

Kitty was engaged and expected to be married in the summer, but, so far as I know, Helen had never yet had a lover. Kitty used to pour all sorts of girlish confidences into my mistress' ears as they sat in Helen's room. "Of course," she used to say, "it would be all wrong to marry for money or to let that influence one in any way; but now, since I'm in love with Fred, and he's in love with me, and we're engaged, and it's all settled — I've been thinking it over, and I am awfully glad that he's rich."

And Helen, listening to Kitty's chatter, with her head upon her hand and a dreamy

look in her sweet brown eyes, never had seemed so beautiful before. A tender smile was upon her lips as she replied: “Do you know I’ve thought sometimes that if I ever have a lover I hope he may be poor.”

Then Kitty laughed. “Why, of course, you romantic goose. That’s because you’ve enough for two, yourself. And, besides that, you don’t know anything about how horrid it is to be poor, as I do.”

All this time I had never heard a word about John and Dolly, although I had thought of them often. Once I had thought for a moment that I saw Dolly passing, but I saw afterward that the woman looked older and that she walked with a groping, unsteady gait and leaned heavily upon the lady who was with her. So, of course, I knew that it could not be Dolly; but I used to keep a pretty close watch at the window after that, thinking that some time she really might come by. Once again I thought that I recognized

my old mistress in a young lady with just such a quick, elastic gait and neat, trim figure as Dolly's own. Helen had me out for an airing, and the young lady was coming rapidly toward us. I ran a few steps to meet her, but I saw immediately that I was mistaken again, for the lady was a blonde with yellow hair and the bluest of blue eyes, and did not resemble Dolly in the least.

They were busy making preparations for the coming wedding over at Kitty's house, and Helen used to take me there almost every day, for it was only half a dozen blocks away. Helen used to wish to help Kitty with her sewing, but, to tell the truth, my mistress was not an adept in the use of the needle, and the work which she did was apt to have to be done over after she went home. One day Kitty declared that Helen should not touch a needle, but must sit and talk to her, instead. Helen insisted upon sewing, and at last Kitty mischievously told her that they always had

to pick out her stitches and do them over, anyhow. Kitty's mother glanced reprovingly at her, but it was too late, for Helen was really hurt, and no amount of coaxing or apologizing would make her stay longer. So she put on her wraps in a dignified way, and we started for home, after an ostentatiously affectionate good-by to Kitty's mother and a decidedly cool one to Kitty.

We had turned into our own street and were near the gate of our home, when a man with a long wire lasso came tearing down the sidewalk toward us, and I saw that he was coming directly for me. I started and ran as fast as I could, but I could tell by the sound of his heavy foot-steps that he was in hot pursuit and gaining upon me. Just then the chase was joined by a third party.

A young fellow coming by with a big book under his arm had seen the sport, and, speaking a word of encouragement to poor Helen, who stood trembling with anger and excite-

ment, he threw his book down on the walk and started off on a swinging run that soon put the dog-catcher in the rear. He overtook me and caught me in his arms. I was trembling and out of breath with fear and the unusual exertion. He spoke very gently to me ; but his voice took quite another tone when he bade my tormentor go about his business, to which the man replied that that was exactly what he was doing. After a spirited debate and dire threats upon both sides, the dog-catcher started off upon the track of another dog whom he saw in the distance, and the young man carried me back to my mistress.

Helen could scarcely thank my preserver enough for having saved me from a cruel fate. Very pretty she looked as she stood there, her cheeks flushed with excitement and her eyes now flashing with anger, then beaming with gratitude. Very handsome he looked — this tall, athletic fellow — with his

bright blue eyes dancing with fun, and in his gay, frank manner turning the whole affair into a good joke. He held the gate open for Helen to enter, picked up his book, and, lifting his hat, he went on.

I noticed that, while Helen told her aunt of the adventure, she did not mention it to her father, and I fancied that it was because she hated to hear him laugh.

“I know that he was a medical student, auntie, because I noticed his text-book,” said Helen, the next day. And Mrs. Litchfield looked up from her book in some surprise and asked, “Who?” Helen blushed a rosy red then, for she realized that her remark must have seemed irrelevant to her aunt, since the young stranger had not been mentioned except when Helen had related her adventure the day before.

But to Kitty—whom she must have forgiven, since she went there the next day as

though nothing had happened — to Kitty I noticed that she talked more freely.

"How was he dressed? Did he look as though he were well-to-do?" demanded this worldly-minded young person.

"No," answered Helen, thoughtfully, "I think not. In fact, I remember that I noticed that his clothes were a little bit shabby." And the irreverent Katherine Elizabeth giggled.



XI.

KITTY'S wedding was a very small and unpretentious affair, and everybody said that it was charming. Mrs. Litchfield and Mr. Heatherton and Helen were the only guests outside of the immediate families of the bride and groom. I had an especial invitation. "Come early, dear, and don't forget to bring Vic," Kitty said, as she kissed Helen good-by, for the fortieth time, on the afternoon of her wedding day.

After dinner that night, Helen slipped on a simple white gown, and then we all walked over to Kitty's. Helen insisted upon walking. It seemed so much nicer, she said, since it was just to be an informal wedding, to run over in a neighborly way, instead of going in the carriage.

I trotted along after Helen, and when we

reached the house I followed her right up to Kitty's room. Kitty was very sweet in her bridal robes, and she was wonderfully happy. She kissed Helen, and laughed and cried all at once, and she even caught me up and gave me a good hug.

Pretty soon Fred came and led her, all smiles and blushes, down to the parlor, and they were married. Every one said that it was all very natural and unaffected, and quite unlike any other wedding that they had seen. Of course, I don't know about that, for I never went to another; but it seemed beautiful to me, because everybody was so happy. Even Mrs. Litchfield's care-worn look disappeared for the time, and Helen's father was more dignified and subdued and gentle than I had ever seen him before.

After all was over, and they had kissed the bride and eaten the dainty supper, and toasted the bride and groom and everybody else in a very merry fashion, Kitty went up and

put on a dark gown, and then she and Fred drove away in a carriage, amid a shower of kisses and rice, and followed by a chorus of good-bys.

We all went home after that. Helen lagged a little behind her father and her aunt, and I suited my pace to hers and kept at her heels. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and Helen stopped at the door to watch a falling star.

"Come, come, Nell, what are you loitering for?" called her father.

"I was making a wish for Kitty," she said, laughingly, as she kissed them good-night and went up to bed.

The day after the wedding I saw my deliverer again. Helen had been over to cheer Kitty's mother, for it was lonely without Kitty. As they stood at the door chatting, the tall young man, with his text-book under his arm, came by. He raised his hat courteously, and Helen blushed and had

almost bowed in return, when she perceived that his salute had been to the older lady. Then she blushed still more and looked very much confused. Kitty's mother raised her brows inquiringly when she saw Helen's pink cheeks and conscious manner; so Helen laughed and told her all about my adventure.

"Well, he's a nice boy," said she, when Helen had done telling her how he had rescued me. "I have known his mother for years, and I know that he is a kind son and a good, true fellow. He is studying medicine and will graduate this year." And Kitty's mother ran on with a deal of pleasant gossip concerning the young man. It did not interest me at all, but I saw that Helen listened very intently.

"What is his name?" I heard my mistress ask, as I came back from a little run up the street.

"Valentine Merton," was the reply.

As Helen sat by her window that night,

looking up at the moon, I heard her say to herself: “Valentine Merton — that is a good name.”

I never knew just how it was that Val Merton was formally introduced to Helen; but I always thought that it was through Kitty’s mother that they became acquainted. At any rate, it was not long before he was a frequent visitor at the house and a great favorite with everybody.

He used to stop often on his way to and from the college, and Mrs. Litchfield and Helen were always entertained and amused by his frank, boyish ways and his accounts of the things that happened, and his funny stories about his classmates. And in the course of time it became “Helen” and “Val,” instead of the more formal “Miss Heatherton” and “Mr. Merton.”

Mrs. Litchfield had a more than kindly regard for the young man, and she took a sort of motherly interest in his plans for the

future. Thus it came that Val's ambitions, his hopes and his prospects were freely talked of among them all.

One day, shortly after his graduation, he was offered an opening with a celebrated specialist. This meant success to his cherished aims; and as soon as he had told his mother, he hurried over to bring his good news to his dearest friends.

Mrs. Litchfield met him at the door. She was delighted at his success and grasped his hand warmly in congratulation. "Of course you'll want to tell Helen yourself," she said demurely, although there was a sly twinkle in her eyes. "Helen is out, but I look for her any minute, and, as there are callers in the drawing-room, and brother's lawyer is busy in the library, I am going to take you right up to Helen's sitting-room — that is, if you wish to wait for her."

A look of positive gratitude lighted Val's boyish face, and he murmured that if she

pleased he would wait until Helen came. Then he followed Mrs. Litchfield up the stairs, and I pattered along behind. Mrs. Litchfield threw open the door and showed Val into the room; then, excusing herself, she hastily withdrew.

Val stood just inside the door, looking about the pretty room, as though it were too sacred a place to be entered. He drew in long breaths of the fragrance of the roses which Helen kept always about, and his eyes seemed to have taken in every detail of his surroundings before he ventured to cross to the window. He stood there for a moment enjoying the dainty sweetness of the room; then he took a corner of the silken window drapery in his hand, and, first pressing it to his cheek, he kissed it reverently.

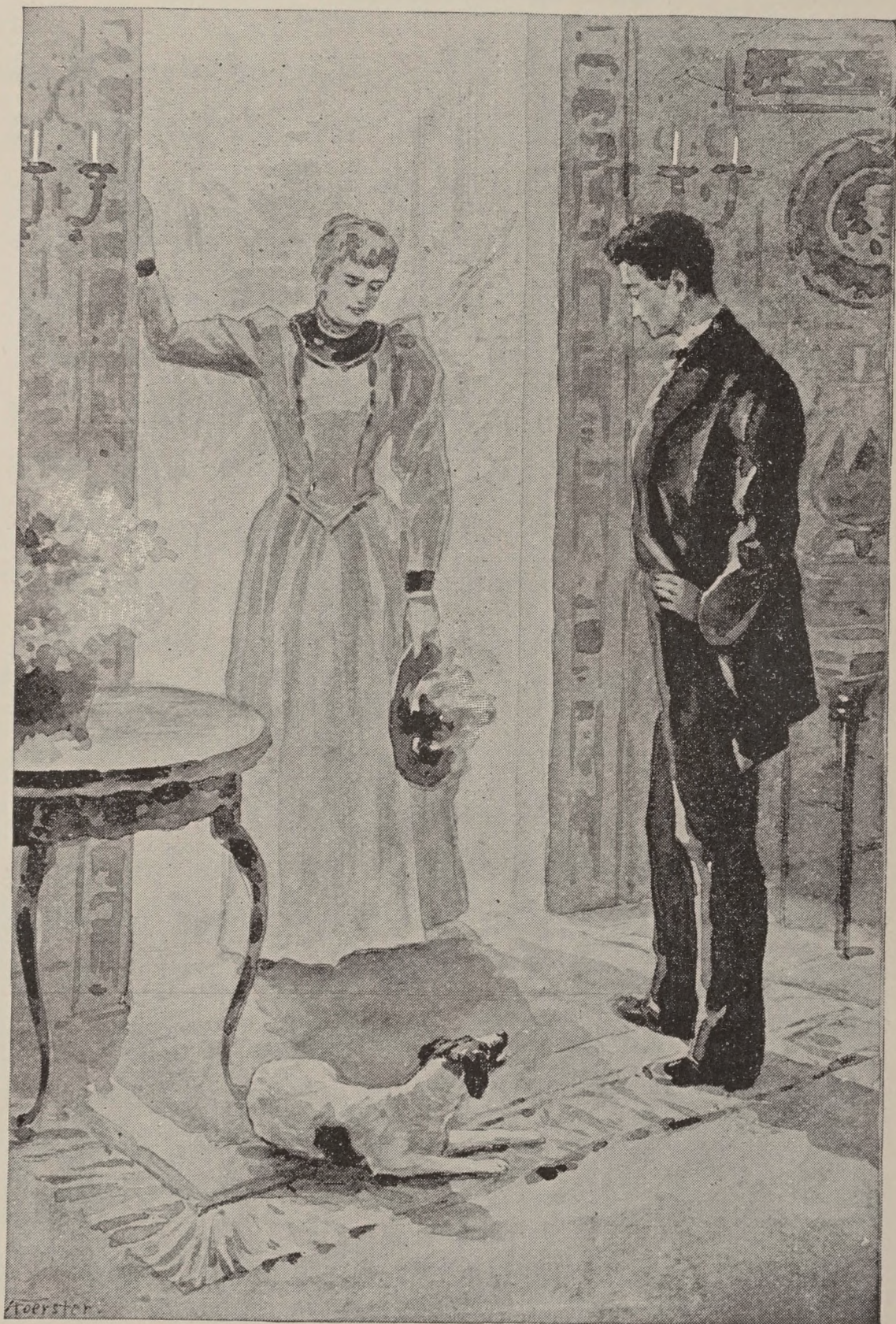
When he noticed me he seemed confused for a moment. “Vic, old dog,” said he, presently, “why should I mind you? You know how I love her, don’t you?” I wagged my tail, which meant that of course I had

known it all the time ; but Val did not seem to understand me at all, for he went on, saying in a half whisper, “ Yes, Vic, I love her — I love her — I love her.” I began to wonder if he really thought that I was too stupid to understand what he said ; so I looked up in his face and barked, and just then Helen came in, and I supposed that, of course, he would tell her, too.

Helen was out of breath from hurrying up-stairs, for her aunt had told her that Val was waiting for her with good news.

She came in, all rosy from her walk, and with an expectant look on her sweet face. Val began to tell her about his new prospects, but he did not put half the enthusiasm into telling it that he had when he told Mrs. Litchfield.

He mumbled and stumbled over his words, and seemed so painfully embarrassed that it confused Helen too ; and then they both stood there, silent, like the two silliest people



"You tell her, Vic."

in the whole world. He was looking down at her, and she was looking down at the rug, until her eyes fell upon me. I looked very eager—oh, how I did wish that I could speak—and Helen asked: “What is it, Vic?” I looked straight at Val, and at last he stammered out: “She wants me to tell you what I’ve been telling her, but I have not the courage. *You* tell her, Vic.” And then Helen bent down and laid her cheek upon my neck and asked: “What was it, Vic?” But there was no need for me to tell, for Val’s arm slipped about Helen’s waist then, and, with her head upon his shoulder, he somehow mustered courage to tell her what he had told me, and a good deal more, too.

That night, after Helen had gone to bed, she reached down and gently pinched my ear as I lay in my basket. Whenever Helen pinched my ears I knew that she was very happy.

Now, it may seem conceited of me to say

it, but, as I think it all over, I honestly believe that if it had not been for me, Val would never have dared tell Helen at all.



XII.

ABOUT a month after Helen's engagement was announced, Mr. Heatherton fell ill. This illness did not seem serious at first, and he laughed at Mrs. Litchfield's anxiety, and quite refused to call a physician or to keep his bed. He insisted that he would be about in a day or two, and that he only needed a little petting. So he would lie upon the drawing-room lounge, with me curled up at his feet, and listen to Helen as she played upon the piano the airs which he loved. He had been accustomed to joke about Helen's singing before, for she had rather a weak little voice, although it was very sweet. But now he used to ask her to sing very often ; and he would call always for the old-fashioned tunes, like "The Ingleside" and "Annie Laurie" and "The Land o' the Leal."

Helen would sing them, in her soft, little, crooning voice, and her father would quite forget to make fun, but would pronounce them charming and would say that there was really something wonderfully sympathetic about her voice, after all, and that she must keep up her practice better. Then Helen would blush with pleasure at his compliments and would pull my ears to hide her embarrassment.

The few days of rest did not set Mr. Heatherton up, as he had expected; and days ran into weeks, but still he was unable to go down to his business, and he looked very thin and pale. Val tried to frighten him into consulting a more experienced physician, but he laughed at their fears. Finally, however, just to humor Helen, he consented to call their family doctor. With grave faces Mrs. Litchfield and Helen and Val listened to his verdict. There was little to do, he said, only to humor the patient and to keep him as comfortable and quiet as

possible—that was all. Mr. Heatherton never inquired what the doctor had said.

There were many long, quiet days after that. No visitors were allowed except Val, and the sick man's face always brightened at his step. Sometimes they would play a game at dominoes or checkers—Val and he—but Mr. Heatherton would forget the points and would soon tire of playing.

In time the invalid took to his bed. He had no pain, only a feeling of languor. At first he kept saying that he would be up in a day or so; but after a while he quite forgot about getting up, and lay there perfectly content. He liked to have me near him, and so I used to lie all day by his side, and he would rest one hand upon my head. As the time passed I could not help noticing that his hand was growing thinner and whiter, and that it lay heavier upon me.

Helen was with him constantly. She used to read and sing and to talk with him, and

there seemed a closer companionship between the two than there ever had been before. Helen had brought her mother's portrait down from her sitting-room and had hung it at the foot of his bed, and her father used to talk for hours of the goodness and beauty of the mother whom Helen could not remember. Sometimes he was quite absent-minded, and he would ask, over and over again, the same questions, forgetting that Helen had replied to them. When he would suddenly recollect himself, he would laugh—a queer little laugh, half like a sob.

Val was very kind and tender. It frightened him to see how pale Helen was growing. "You must get out of doors, Helen; you will make yourself ill," I heard him whisper to her one day while her father slept. But Helen put her finger on her lips and shook her head. "He would miss me," she said, simply, and Val only kissed her for a reply.

At times Mr. Heatherton scarcely talked at all. He would lie in a sort of doze, holding always to Helen's hand ; and when she would ask if he was quite comfortable, he would nod in reply, and smile a sweet, happy smile.

At last he lay all the time in a stupor, and the doctor said that the end was very near. They never left him—Helen and Mrs. Litchfield and Val—after that. One day, just as the sunset was turning everything to gold, he roused from his stupor, and, raising his head, he looked uneasily about the room, as though seeking something with his eyes. When his glance fell upon his wife's portrait, his face lit with a satisfied smile, and he sank back, still looking at the pictured face, which was radiant in the golden glow.

With a feeble motion he beckoned Val and Helen to come closer, and he took a hand of each into one of his own thin hands ; then he stretched out his other hand as

though he wished for something more. Mrs. Litchfield made a motion toward his medicine, but he shook his head with a troubled look. Then Helen whispered, "He wants you, auntie;" and as she slipped her fingers into his, the contented look came back; and, with a child-like smile on his lips, his life went out with the dying day.



XIII.

ON the day of Mr. Heatherton's funeral I was stolen, and this is the way it happened. As the last of the long line of carriages drove away from the house, the cook remembered that in the grief and excitement I had been quite forgotten, and that I had not been fed that day; so she came up to Helen's room after me, filled with self-reproach for her neglect. I tried to eat, but the food choked me, for I could only think of poor Helen and her sorrow. Cook said to Bettine that I must have fresh air to give me an appetite; so she put me out of doors in the back yard.

I had only been there a short time when I was seized by a man who jumped over the fence, and, thrusting me into a bag, jumped back again in a jiffy. I was conscious then

of being thrown into a buggy and driven off at a rapid gait.

The bag was tightly wrapped about me, so that I could not see at all where I was being carried; but from the conversation of the two men, one of whom had waited with the horse while the other seized me, I learned that I was being stolen partly in the hope of a reward and partly to gratify a spite.

It was Susan, my former enemy, who had told the men where I could be found. I was to be taken to the home of her aunt, in the outskirts of the city, where I was to be left until a reward was offered for my recovery. Susan's aunt was an honest old soul, and she would not for the world be a receiver of stolen goods. She was not to know that I had been stolen, for the men were to say that I had been given to Susan, and that she begged that her aunt would take care of me until she could find me another place. All this I learned by keeping my ears open.

It was with no ungentle hand that my abductor undid my wrappings and lifted me out of the buggy. He set me down on the ground, but he took the precaution to thrust my head between his feet, so that I could not run away, while he fumbled in his pocket for a bit of stout string. This string he tied about my neck, and he led me into the yard and rang at the door of the cottage.

When he had explained his errand to Susan's aunt, who seemed to know the man, she peered through her glasses at me and said that Susan was a great one, to saddle a dog onto her at her time of life, but that it all came of her being over-indulgent, and that she supposed that it couldn't be helped, because she was born so. Then she said: "Come along, Fido," and she pulled me into the house and shut the door in the man's face.

Everything was comfortable inside the cottage, and much neater and cleaner than

one would expect to find it in such an unpleasant locality—for the narrow, unpaved street contained only little cottages and shanties, and many of the vacant lots were filled with tin cans and all sorts of rubbish.

Susan's aunt was very kind to me. She fed me well and made me a good, soft bed; but she kept me tied to her chair all the time, partly because she feared that I would run away, but still more because she was afraid that I would get out and chase her chickens.

So it was that, except my first glance, I had scarcely seen what the neighborhood was like, although I had been there two weeks, for the moment that I tried to look about me when out of doors she jerked me into the house, muttering: "It's them chickens. She smells 'em."

One day she went out and left me alone, still tied to her chair, which was, luckily, a light one, so that I could drag it with me to

the window. It was my first taste of anything like liberty, and I looked about me with great interest. There was something in the whole neighborhood which seemed half-familiar. The house next door was an old shanty, with a little wing newly built. It seemed almost as though I knew the place, and yet it seemed somewhat strange. I was trying to straighten it all out in my mind, when the door opened, and out came a ruddy-faced little old woman, with a big, shining milk-can in her hand.

I knew her in a minute. It was Dinny's grandmother, and with one leap I went through the window, breaking the string which had held me. The old woman did not see from which direction I had come, for she only discovered me when I ran under her feet.

She was very nearly upset by my frantic attempts to show my joy at seeing her again. She knew me at once. “Well, well, now!

if it ain't Toby! He's sthrayed away again, an' he do remember we be his friends. Won't the lad be keen to take him back to his swate misthress? It do be a long time since he was here before." She patted me gently, and then shut me in the shanty, that I might surprise Dinny when he came home, and off she trotted with her can.

From the window of Dinny's shanty I could look across to the house which I had just left, and soon I saw Susan's aunt return from her errand. She had not been long in the house before she discovered my absence, and the broken string showed that I had left in a hurry. She came out, and I saw her go into the street and look up and down, shading her eyes with her hand. I fancied that there was a look of relief on her face when she went back into the house, as much as to say that she had done her duty, and it couldn't be helped, and now, thank goodness, her chickens would be safe.

When Dinny came home that night I ran to meet him, and he was so glad to see me that he actually tried to stand upon his head. He hugged me and kissed me, and called me all sorts of pet names, and then he tried to make me do the tricks which he had taught me ; but I am ashamed to say that I had almost forgotten them, and I did them very clumsily and awkwardly indeed.

Dinny had grown to be quite a lad, and he walked and ran about, almost like other boys. The hump was still there between his shoulders, but it looked to me much smaller than it was before. When his granny came home, they talked it all over and decided that Dinny was to take me back to my mistress early next morning, before he went to his work—for he was at work now in a great shop down town, and he earned enough so that they were very comfortable.

Of course they knew nothing of my hav-

ing been sold, and they supposed that I still belonged to Dolly and John. Dinny looked and found the address which Dolly had so carefully written for him a long time before, and he laid it with his cap that he might have it ready the next morning. After we had gone to bed — I in my old place on Dinny's cot — Dinny called out to his grandmother, "Granny, fwat if de lady be moved away?" and the old woman answered: "Sure then, youse can foind from the neighbors 'round where she bees gone. Whist, lad, to sleep wid yez."

You can imagine that I slept but little that night. The excitement of my escape and the thought of seeing my dear mistress and master once more were too strong for me, and I found myself lying there wide-awake, in spite of all I could do. I had thought of Helen often since I had been taken away from her. I missed her sweet face and her kind words, and I knew that she must miss me; still I

felt that in her present grief and her sorrow she had Val to comfort her, and that, although she loved me, she never could miss me and need me as Dolly did. Somehow, in all the time that I had been away from her, I still felt that I belonged to Dolly. And whenever I thought that I was to go to her in the morning, I almost barked for joy.

Daylight came at last, and when Dinny had eaten his breakfast he fed me and kissed his grandmother, and we started off together. It was a long walk to my old home, but we got there at last, and I cannot tell you how my heart sank when Dinny read the name upon the door-plate and found that it was not that of my old master. “Could yez give me the address of the gentleman who used to live here?” asked Dinny of the girl who answered his ring. The girl wrote it down for him. It was in a neighboring suburb, half an hour out by the steam-cars, she said.

Dinny trudged across lots to the station near by, and we took the first train out of the city.

Dinny was allowed to hold me upon his lap, and from the car window I got my first sight of green fields, which stretched away as far as I could see. The air was fresh and sweet, and I sniffed it with delight. When we reached the town for which we were bound Dinny had no trouble in finding the place for which he was looking. It was a big, pretty house, with a great lawn and trees, and with hammocks and vines and flowers about everywhere. We ran up the walk, and Dinny rang the bell.

"Can we see the missis?" asked Dinny, including me in his pronoun.

"Well, thin, I'll see," answered the smiling, broad-faced girl who came to the door.

"Who is it, Nora?" a soft, sad voice called, and Nora replied, "Sure it's only a shmall b'y wid a dog." I pushed past the girl and ran into the parlor, for I was sure that I rec-

ognized Dolly's voice. But was it Dolly or was it not—the pale woman who sat there so still among the cushions of an easy-chair? She looked so much older than Dolly had looked, and her hair was all streaked with gray. I went up closer to make sure, and I sniffed at her gown. She reached out, gropingly, for me; then, as she felt my nose, she cried out “Vic!” and I knew that it was Dolly, and she knew that it was I.

For a moment she held me tightly, and I felt the hot tears falling upon my head, while I licked her dear hands; and then she reached for her handkerchief to dry her tears, but she could not find it, although it was in plain sight and very near her—for my poor mistress was quite blind.

XIV.

DINNY had explained to the servant his errand, and she came to her mistress with his message. Dolly said that there must have been a mistake, because they had not owned me for a long time, but she said that she would keep me and have her husband return me to my owner, whoever he might be. She gave a little sigh as she said that, as though she could not bear to part from me again. Then she asked Nora if the boy who had brought me was a freckle-faced little fellow with a crooked back. When Nora said that he was, Dolly cried, "Why, it must be Dinny. Bring him in to me, Nora." All this time she was holding me tightly as though she feared that I might get away from her.

Dinny shyly followed Nora in, and Dolly

called him to her. “And so you remember me, Dinny?” she said. “You see that I haven’t forgotten you, either. But I cannot see you at all, dear; please come near and let me see how tall you have grown.” She passed her fingers lightly over the boy’s face and shoulders. “Why, you are a great boy now. And so the doctor was right; they did make you well, didn’t they? Tell me all about it, please. But first tell me where you found Vic.”

Dinny told her all that he knew; he said that he had not found me, but that I had found him, and that it was very mysterious how I had come to them. Then he told about himself and his granny; how the doctors had kept him for a long time at the hospital and then sent him home almost well; how he had worked first at selling papers and afterward in a shop, where he had earned good wages. And Dolly was very glad to hear that they had built a new

wing on the shanty with the money which Dinny had saved.

When he had finished telling all his own story, he said, timidly : " An' you, lady, have youse been ailin' long."

" For many months, dear," said she.

" Mabby thim same doctors could heal yez," suggested the lad.

" I am afraid not. I have tried a great many of them." And she changed the subject back to me again.

Soon Dinny said that he must be getting back to his work; and it was very reluctantly that he accepted the money which Dolly paid him for his trouble.

Some things had gone well with John and Dolly since I had left them. Their money troubles were over, and John was strong and well again. But the worry and over-work had left my mistress in a weak condition, and a severe strain upon her eyesight had resulted in total blindness. In vain

they had procured the best medical help for her; she was little improved, and, except when John was with her to lead her about, she sat patiently idle, with a pitifully sad look on her face—the mere shadow of her old, merry self.

John was delighted to see me again. He said that he was tempted to keep me at all hazards, and that he almost dreaded to find my owner for fear that he would not sell me. “For you must have her, Dolly, even if I have to steal her for you,” he said, jokingly. But he advertised faithfully and really tried to trace my ownership, although I dare say that he was glad that I was not claimed by any one.

It was touching to see John’s tender devotion to Dolly. He would lift her up and carry her about in the yard, guiding her hands among the plants and flowers, that she might see how they were thriving. It seemed very sad to me to see busy little

Dolly so still and silent. During all the hours that John was at home, he never left her side, and I was always sure to be right at their heels.

At last it occurred to John that Mr. Doyd was the only one who could straighten out my appearance upon the scene. One day Mr. Doyd came home with John; and I was laughingly shown as an example of a faithful dog who would follow his master to the end of the earth. They had a long talk, and Mr. Doyd promised to look the matter up and to arrange for my purchase, if possible, provided he could find my owner.

Mr. Doyd was quite as fat and as funny as ever, and he talked as loudly as before. He had a great deal to say about a new pointer of his which was gun-shy; but I noticed that he kept his eyes upon Dolly all of the time and winked very hard, and seemed to be swallowing at a lump in his throat. Before he left he tried to engage my mistress in

conversation, but he blundered about and seemed to get nowhere at all in what he was telling; and at last he ended by saying, in a broken sort of way: “I’d—I’d really like to see you feelin’ brisker, my dear.” And Dolly actually laughed aloud, almost as she had laughed in the old times.

John looked fairly startled for a moment; then he ran across to her and took both of her hands in his, crying: “Oh, Dolly, let me hear you laugh again. You don’t know how it helps me, dear.”

Mr. Doyd winked and swallowed harder than ever, and he picked up his cane and started off without his hat; then he came back for his hat and started away without his cane. When he had really got both and was gone out of sight, John told Dolly how he had looked, and that made her laugh again.

That night, as they talked it all over, John said that he was beginning to fear that Dolly

never would smile again, because her life was so saddened. And Dolly stretched out her arms toward him, and said: "Oh, John, I have been so selfish to be always thinking of my own sorrow. I never have seemed to remember that it was hard for you too. Can you forgive me, dear?" Then John told her that she was the dearest, most patient and unselfish woman in the world, and that if he could make her just a little happy, he never would ask for anything else. I barked loudly and tried to get their notice then, for I wanted them to see how I loved them; but, for once, they paid no attention to me, for they were laughing and kissing each other; and finally I crawled off by myself, feeling a little bit snubbed.

After that, Dolly was different. She was cheerful and even merry at times, and sometimes I heard her singing to herself as she sat waiting for John. Her voice was very low and unsteady, as though she had almost

forgotten how to sing, but I could hear it because I was very close to her—right at her feet, lying on the train of her soft gown.

The first that we learned of Mr. Doyd's success in finding my owner was when Helen came to see us. I knew her when she opened the gate, and I ran to greet her and jumped about her feet. It had been months since I had seen her. Then she had been thin and pale, but now she had grown plump and rosy again, and she looked very beautiful and sweet.

She seemed very much pleased to see me, and I led the way proudly to Dolly, who sat on the piazza among the vines and flowers. Dolly arose at the sound of her approaching footsteps, and Helen introduced herself and said that she had come from Mr. Doyd. She said that Mr. Doyd had told her a good deal of my past history, and that he had said that my old master would like to buy me back again ; but they would talk of that later.

Then they began to chat like two old friends, and fully an hour passed before Helen arose to go. "And now about Vic," she said, taking both of Dolly's hands in her own. "I want to get a home for her, because we are going to sail for Europe next month, and the house will be closed for an indefinite time. So you see that you will do me a favor by accepting what is really your own—for I feel that Vic belongs to you more than to me. She will be such company for you, and she loves you far better than she ever did me. It will make my mind easier to know that she has a kind mistress and a good home; and, besides, I do not need her a bit myself, for I—am going—to be married." And Helen blushed all over her sweet face. Then she kissed Dolly before she could say a word in remonstrance to her offer, and, calling a good-by to my mistress and me, she ran down to the gate.

And Dolly smiled to herself as she groped her way along the porch to where the four-o’clocks grew. They were her time-pieces, she said, and when they opened she knew that it would not be long before John would be home. But this time the day was a little cloudy and the blossoms were still closed, although it was quite late. Dolly gave a little sigh. “Vic, why is it that time goes so slowly when we have good news to tell?” she asked me; and I barked, for I saw John coming over the top of the hill.



XV.

FOR a year our life was very uneventful in that pretty country home, and then a wonderful thing happened. It would take a long time to tell you all about Dolly's recovery of her sight. There were long months of treatment, and then a painful operation, and at last my mistress was able to see again.

I shall never forget the day when she came home. They had taken the bandages from her eyes that day, and she could hardly wait, so impatient was she to get home; for she had been all this time in a city hospital.

I was watching at the window for her. She wore a thick veil, so that her eyes should not be strained before they had become accustomed to the light. As soon as he had led her into the hall, John picked her up and danced about like mad, still holding her in

his arms. He was fairly frantic in his delight, capering about in so undignified a fashion that Dolly screamed with laughter and begged to be let down. At last, when his glasses had fallen off and my master was quite out of breath, he set Dolly down in a great chair and carefully undid the veil and wrappings from her eyes.

I jumped into her arms in an instant, for it was the first chance that I had had to get near to her, because all my attention had been required in keeping out from under John's feet. After she had hugged me and told me over and over again how happy she was to get back, she held me up to look at me. You must remember that it had been a long, long time since she had seen me at all. I suppose that I must have appeared somewhat changed to her; at any rate she gave a little surprised exclamation when she discovered some gray hairs about my ears.

"John, bring me a hand-glass," said she

suddenly, as though an idea had just come to her. John trotted off obediently, and returned bringing a small mirror, which he presented to her with a comical low bow. Dolly held it up and looked into it. Her cheeks had grown plump and smooth again, and the fresh color had come back with her recovered health. She gave a satisfied little sigh when she saw the pretty face reflected there; then she bent down her head, and for the first time she saw the silver streaks through the waving brown hair.

"Oh, John!" she said in a tone of despair, dropping the mirror and clasping her hands in a woeful attitude.

"What, Dolly?" asked John cheerfully.

"Why *didn't* you tell me?"

"Tell you what, dear?" smiled John.

"Why, that I was getting *old*," said my mistress, with a real sob in her voice; and then so queer a thing happened that I could not understand it at all — Dolly, my mis-

tress, who had borne poverty, illness, and even the loss of sight, without a murmur, laid her head down on her John's shoulder and actually cried because she was getting gray.

It was in the fall when Dolly was pronounced cured, and she and John and I spent hours wandering about in the woods behind the house. Dolly said that it seemed as though she never could make up for lost time in enjoying the beauties of the gorgeous autumn coloring. And she would sit and draw in long breaths of the fresh, sweet air, while John ran to bring her the leaves which she most admired, and I would dig and hunt about for wood-chucks or gophers or any other live thing that might be about.

Fall ran on into winter, and then Helen came back from the long foreign tour, bringing a little Helen who pulled my ears and said "a-gee" and "a-goo." Mrs. Litchfield used to come out with Helen sometimes, but

she paid very little attention to me and still called me "*it*." She was married the next year and went to live in a distant city, where she was soon followed by Helen and Val; for Val found there just the opening which he had been seeking for in his professional work. Dolly has always heard often from them, and the pictures of Baby Helen which they have sent my mistress from time to time would quite fill a bushel basket, I am sure.

Dolly continued to improve all that winter, and I never shall forget the merry time that we had at Christmas of that year, and I am going to tell you about it.

The morning before that happy day, Nora came in with her eyes open wide.

"Shure, an' is it a party wese be havin' to-morrer? There do be the biggest turkey I iver seen come up wid the other things. He do weigh twinty pounds, shure."

And John laughed and said: "Yes, Nora,

we are to have some waifs out to help eat him."

"Waifs, is it? Look out it ain't thafes, thin," said Nora, laughing at her own joke, as she went back to the kitchen.

The next day John went into town early and at noon came home, bringing three dirty, ragged little strangers whom he had picked up at random on the streets.

"I invited Dinny, but he had another engagement," he laughingly called to Dolly as she opened the door. "These are some little friends whom I met down town. They are Marcus and Harry and Jacob. Boys, shake hands with the lady." One by one each of the boys timidly put a grimy little paw into Dolly's white hand. "I am glad to see you, boys," she said, and the boys all grinned a little and stood looking down at their feet.

When Dolly led them into the parlor they all huddled close together on the sofa, and

sat there, too much embarrassed to speak, until John called me in and made me sit up and roll over for them. Then he called Dolly to come with him, and they ran off up-stairs. I knew that it was not a usual thing to leave visitors like that, but I could see that my master had done a kind thing in going out of the room; for as soon as the boys saw that they were alone they began to talk to each other, timidly at first, then more freely, until they seemed to feel quite at home. They went about on tip-toe, looking at the pictures and furniture and making comments on what they saw.

They seemed to like me, and they were not afraid of me at all. Harry kept me performing my tricks until I was quite tired of it and crawled off under the lounge and pretended to be asleep.

They were interesting little fellows. Marcus was a German boy, and Harry was Irish, while Jacob, the youngest, was a Jew.

They were eleven, ten and nine years of age, respectively. Marcus had a beautiful, thoughtful face, with dark, earnest eyes and a tender little mouth ; while Harry was a pug-nosed, freckle-faced little lad, with merry gray eyes ; and Jacob — well, you would have laughed to see Jacob, with his comical, hooked nose and his little squint eyes, which were quite crossed ; and, besides, Jacob talked through his nose in a sort of half-whisper.

When my master and mistress came down to their little guests, the boys seemed to have overcome their shyness, for they talked and laughed and listened to Dolly as she played and sang for them until it was dinner-time. John sent them to the bath-room to clean up a bit before they went out to dinner ; and they looked quite like different boys when they came down with their faces shining with soap and water, and their hands clean — up to their coat sleeves.

They tiptoed awkwardly into the dining-room, and took their seats in frightened silence; but when they saw me take my station in the deep window-seat, overlooking the table, they thought it was very funny, and they all laughed aloud.

My mistress did not feed me at the table, but she always allowed me to sit in the window, where I could see all that went on and listen to what was said. It was worth while to see those children eat. Over and over again master filled their plates, and finally Marcus stopped with a little sigh, while Harry fairly groaned.

"It seems so good to have enough to eat," said Marcus, thoughtfully, and I saw tears in Dolly's eyes as he added: "You know we can't have all we want at home, because there are so many of us." And when Marcus said that he believed that a dinner like that would have cost as much as thirty-five cents at a restaurant, Dolly said that she had never had

a more honest compliment than that. John said it was a study to see the small Jacob tiptoe around and pick up Harry's napkin, which had fallen under the table.

In the afternoon there was more music. Afterward Marcus amused himself with pencil and crayon, and Jacob was happy to be allowed to show what he could do with a pen and ink. These two sat and drew pictures, while Harry, who had no taste for such things, looked longingly at Dolly's guitar, which stood in a corner.

“Would you like to take it, dear?” asked Dolly, who seemed to read his thoughts. Harry's eyes fairly danced, but he was too shy to answer, and only hung his head and blushed. Then Dolly put the guitar into his hands, and she and John pretended not to notice the little lad as he softly fingered the keys, keeping time with a foot which stuck, half bare, out of his torn shoe. He was sitting on the great lounge, and for half an

hour the gentle tinkle told John and Dolly that the lad was perfectly content. Then the soft sounds ceased, and Dolly turned and saw a happy little freckled face laid close to an old guitar. The gray eyes were shut, and the long black lashes brushed against the thin cheek, and the lad's arms were twined about the instrument in a close embrace.

"Dear little heart," whispered Dolly, and John wiped his glasses.

The guitar was a useless old thing, broken and cracked; and when Harry awoke, Dolly asked him if he would not like to have it for his own.

His eyes glistened. "Oh, 'deed I would! but 'twouldn't do no good, for father he'd take it from me."

"Then will you come out here again and play on it some time?" asked Dolly; and Harry said that he would.

When the boys were ready to go, John



They seemed to like me, and they were not afraid of me at all.

gave each a dollar besides their car-fare, and Dolly added some little gifts and filled their pockets with candy and nuts. “Now, boys, you must all come and see us again,” said she, cordially.

Marcus gravely said: “Yes, ma’am, perhaps we will come on some Thanksgiving day.” Harry only blushed and smiled bashfully; but Jacob, with both of his hands in the box of candy, said, cheerfully: “Bebby we’ll cub dext week.”

And then these three little waifs, who until that day had never seen each other, went out, arm in arm, the best of friends. Of the three, Jacob was the only one whom we never saw again. Marcus came several times, and he always spent the day in drawing and talking to John and Dolly. It was truly wonderful to see how he picked up nice manners and behaved quite like a little gentleman at the table, copying John as closely as he could.

Harry came once. There was with him a white-faced, half-starved little fellow, with a vacant stare on his poor, pinched face. Harry introduced him to Dolly as "Oscar — a boy I *brung*." Oscar was even more quiet than Harry, and he did not open his lips except to eat. But how he did eat!

Harry was cleaner than on the occasion of his first visit, but he was pale and thin, poor lad, and with a tightness in his hollow chest, so that he could scarcely speak without coughing violently. There was the scar of a fresh cut on his head, and a black-and-blue mark on his cheek, and such an odor of stale rum in his clothes that Dolly could easily guess why he had feared to take the guitar home.

Harry played for hours on the guitar, while Oscar gazed wonderingly, filled with admiration, at the performance. And then Nora produced an accordion, as wheezy and asthmatic as the little lad himself. Harry played upon this for a time, but we were all glad

when he went back to the guitar—that is, all except Oscar; he looked wistfully at Nora’s instrument, and Harry shyly announced: “He like de ’cordeen best.”

When it was beginning to grow dark, Dolly wrapped a great, soft muffler of John’s about Harry’s narrow chest, and tucked it in his jacket; then she kissed him and shook hands with Oscar, and the boys went out. “Good-by, dears,” she called, in reply to Harry’s hoarse adieu. Then she turned to my master. “John, we never will see that poor little fellow here again,” said she, gravely.

John shook his head, saying: “No, I fear not.” And they never did. For, when John went the next week to Harry’s home to see if he might bring the little lad out for Dolly to nurse and coddle up a bit, he found him very ill with pneumonia, and three days afterward the poor child died.

XVI.

DOLLY was not very strong the next summer, and one night when John came home he found her in tears. Now, it wasn't a bit like Dolly to cry, and I wondered what could be the matter; for Helen had been out that day, and they had had a nice, cozy visit over their afternoon tea, and both had seemed in unusually good spirits. So when, after Helen had waved good-by from the corner, Dolly came back into the parlor and threw herself down on the lounge and burst out sobbing, I did not know what to make of it.

I rooted about the pillows and tried to get at her, but her face was buried in the eider-down cushion and she would not raise it, although I whined and made a great fuss. Soon, however, she put out her hand and let me lick that, and I tried to comfort her as best

I could. Before John came she became quite calm, but still looked rather melancholy, and when she heard the gate click and his footsteps hurrying up the walk, she began to cry again.

John was dreadfully worried. “Why, little girl, what is it?” asked he, with deep concern, but she only shook her head, and said that she didn’t know. “Has the canned fruit begun to work? Or have you found bugs in Nora’s bed again?” asked John, vainly trying to remember the few times when Dolly had been reduced to tears.

“No,” said Dolly, still weeping, “there isn’t anything; only I feel as though something was about to happen.”

“Of what nature will the catastrophe be? Anything in the cyclone or earthquake line? Because, if it is sure to come, we might as well be prepared,” laughed John, making light of her fears.

“John, please don’t,” sobbed Dolly; and

then John took her on his lap and held her tenderly, and rocked her as a mother rocks her babe; and when tea-time came Dolly was quite herself again.

The next morning's mail brought a postal card for John. He read it aloud:

"DEAR JOHN: Your uncle William and myself will be at your house, if nothing prevents, to-morrow, for a short visit.

"Your most affectionate

AUNT ELIZA."

"There," said Dolly, "I knew it would happen."

"Dolly," said John, "you are gifted with second sight. I will never laugh at your forebodings again." And they both laughed so heartily that Nora came in from the kitchen to see if Dolly had rung.

That was a way Nora had of not missing anything. Whenever there was an unusual bit of fun going on she came in to see if Dolly had rung for her.

The next day the guests arrived. Aunt Eliza was John's aunt, and Uncle William was her father, and great uncle to my master.

Uncle William was over eighty years old, but still hale and hearty, and the kindest, dearest old man that ever lived.

Aunt Eliza was about fifty. She wore a false front of black hair, with a wide parting of net, and her teeth did not fit her—but that was really the fault of the dentist. She was one of those women who are, unfortunately, over-supplied with saliva, as the corners of her mouth testified. When she talked, the saliva was secreted very rapidly indeed, and gave her words an unpleasantly moist sound. She talked a great deal, but mostly to Dolly. To John she had but little to say. Almost everything that Uncle William did called forth the word “Father!” in a reprov-
ing tone.

When they sat down to tea Uncle William carefully laid his napkin to one side, without disturbing Nora’s elaborately folded design, and tucked his red cotton handkerchief, bib-fashion, into his collar.

"Father," said Aunt Eliza, sternly. The old man looked inquiringly at his daughter, and saw that she was eying the handkerchief with disapproval. "It's all right," he said, cheerfully. "I got another for my nose, Lizy!"

Aunt Eliza sniffed her disdain.

When Nora passed the strawberries and cream she proffered the tea-spoons at the same time. Uncle William shook his head. "No, thank you. None for me," he said, picking up the spoon which was in his tea-cup, and beginning at his fruit.

But his daughter was watching him. "Father!" she said, warningly.

"Yes, Lizy," said he, reaching after the retreating Nora, and startling her so that she upset the spoon-holder on the floor. "There, Lizy!" exclaimed he, with some spirit, "I hope you're satisfied now."

Eliza made no reply, but if she was satisfied, she certainly did not look so.

That evening, after supper, the two men

went into the garden to smoke. John smoked a cigar, but he had found for his uncle an old Dutch pipe. It pleased the old man greatly, but, catching sight of Eliza's skirts in the next room, he whispered: “Mebby we'd best go outside, John. Lizy's got a powerful nose for tobacco.” So outside they went, and I followed them. Up and down the paths they walked, the smoke from the pipe mingling with that of the cigar in a blue cloud. Finally they stopped, and stood under the big beech-tree at that side of the yard farthest from the house.

The old man puffed away in meditative silence for a time. “John,” said he, “ever lived about much where there's been many wimmen?”

“No,” answered his nephew, smiling; “only Dolly. You know I never had any sisters, uncle.”

“Yes, yes! I know,” interrupted he. “Thought mebbly you'd seen suthin' of 'em,

boardin' here an' there. Well, they're a queer lot!"

They puffed away again, and the silence was broken only by the soft summer night sounds: the cricket's chirping, the hoarse bull-frog over in the meadow and the far-off murmur of the mourning-dove in the woods. There was something of sadness in the growing darkness, and even I felt the spell.

Presently the old man spoke, but in a low tone, as though he dreaded to break in upon the stillness. "John, can you remember your Aunt Lydja?" asked he.

"No, uncle; you know Aunt Lydia died before I was born."

"Pshaw, pshaw! Of course. What be I thinkin' of?" 'Twas when Lizy was a baby, wa'n't it?" He smoked on for awhile. "Lydja was a likely woman, John. Dolly favors her summat. Odd, too, when there ain't no kinship between 'em. Now, Lizy, she hain't

none o' Lydja's ways. She takes more after me, I reckon"—with a little sigh.

Soon they started toward the house. When they were almost there Uncle William caught John's arm. "See that star, boy?" asked he, pointing with his long pipe-stem to a bright star in the north. "Her and me uster watch that, mor'n sixty years ago."

When Uncle William went into the house Eliza began to sniff about. "Father, you've been smoking!"

"Yes!" said he, a little defiantly.

"And what's made your eyes so red?"

"Smoke blew in 'em," said the old man, although he well knew that there had not been a breath of wind stirring.

Uncle William and Aunt Eliza stayed a week at the house. Uncle William went to town with John each day, and his daughter stayed and "visited" with Dolly. She told my mistress all about John's babyhood; how his mother set him on his feet too soon and

made his legs bow; how backward he had been about talking, and how he had a fearful backset when he was cutting teeth, so that they feared he might be foolish. She said that his mother's family was just full of scrofula, and that it was a blessed mercy that Dolly and John had no children, for likely as not they'd have been rickety.

She spread newspapers down over the carpets so that the sun should not fade the colors; and she asked Dolly if she had had any clothes laid by to be buried in, in case she should be taken suddenly. Aunt Eliza never spoke of dying; she always called it "being taken," and I could see that Dolly shivered whenever she said the words.

She started two quilts for Dolly, a "rising sun" and an "album," and said that she supposed that of course Dolly would have them finished when she came again. Now, my mistress hated a needle. She could not sew a straight seam nor make a proper knot, and

she used to beg John to sew her buttons on for her sometimes, but she never dared to own her weakness to John's aunt, and so she sewed away and pricked her fingers and strained her eyes, that Aunt Eliza might think her industrious.

Aunt Eliza was shocked to find that Dolly didn't put down her own meat. She offered to come over and help her “corn” a quarter in the fall; and when Dolly demurred, on the plea that it disagreed with John, she said: “Um, of course—*scrofulous!*”

Dolly asked John afterward what scrofula really was, and he said he'd be blessed if he knew, only it seemed to be something which the relatives upon each side of a family always secretly accused the other side of having. John said that he had seen pictures of people who were afflicted with the disease, in almanacs and patent-medicine advertisements, and they seemed generally to be going about on crutches and having a hard

time of it ; but as for folks in real life having it, he didn't believe they ever did ; at least he had never seen any cases. Then, as Dolly looked relieved, he added : "Aunt Eliza has been talking to you, I see. Just wait till you hear some of my aunts on my mother's side, if you want to find out who is really responsible for all my shortcomings, physical and mental. And say, Dolly, did she tell you that I was an unusually backward child ?"

"Yes," admitted Dolly, dolefully.

"Well, don't you believe it."

And John kissed Dolly, and ran away, chuckling to himself.

Aunt Eliza asked Dolly if she had ever heard of any insanity in John's mother's family ; and when Dolly said, "No," and asked her what she meant, she said, "Nothing." She just wanted to see if Dolly had heard anything ; and she said it in such a mysterious way that Dolly was half beside herself.

She asked what they were doing for my

fleas. Dolly said that I never had any. Then she said that they needn't tell her that, and ended by saying that if John *must* have a dog, why didn't he get a big one that was of some account? She told Dolly that the way Nora wasted food was a disgrace, and it was little wonder John had a hard time to get along. In fact, if I were to tell half that she said to my poor, discouraged mistress, I would fill a large book.

It would not take long to tell all that Dolly said to her, though, for it was mostly in meek monosyllables that she replied. At the end of the week I heard Uncle William tell John that they had stayed long enough, and ought to go home. "I can see," added he, "that Lizy's frettin' Dolly some, an' we don't want to outstay our welcome. Lizy has a meddlesome way sometimes. We get on first-rate, — her an' me, — for I'm middlin' easy-goin', an' she likes the whip-hand. But I don't want her a pesterin' Dolly." In vain

John urged them to remain longer, and Dolly seconded his invitation. Eliza was willing to stay, but her father insisted that he could tell by his feelings that they were going to have a spell of weather, and he must get back home. So they went away, and Uncle William took Dolly into his arms and kissed her, saying: "Good-by, Dolly. Be good to yourself." And he wiped his glasses and blew his nose all the way to the gate.

John had made the old man a present of the Dutch pipe, for he enjoyed smoking it better than any other. It cooled the smoke just right, he said. As they started off I saw the stem sticking out of his pocket, and I did hope that Eliza wouldn't discover it before they got home. She did not, for in his next letter, quaintly written and spelled, there was a postscript:

"My long-legged friend all right. She draws beautiful."

Eliza had evidently read the letter over, and she did not suspect, for she had written

underneath: “Father is sometimes a little flighty, I fear. You must excuse his postscript.”

It took Dolly a week to get over the effect of Aunt Eliza’s visit. “I do try to like your family, John; but the next time I hope that Uncle William will come alone,” whispered she, as she sat with her head on John’s shoulder. And John responded, fervently, “So do I.”



XVII.

I CANNOT remember whether it was the next year or later that I met Miggles. A stranger had bought the lots next to John's, and had built a very handsome house upon the land. My master's home was a large frame building, with bay windows and porches and odd corners jutting out here and there. It was a comfortable-looking place, and very artistic and picturesque, so every one said. The grounds were large and well-kept, and there was an air of home about everything, and it was, and is yet, the very coziest, dearest spot that you can imagine.

The house next door is a far more imposing structure, Dolly says, but it lacks something, and she never can just make out what. It is a large stone house, with a great deal of stained glass and beveled plate, and every-

thing is very handsome and expensive. Somehow the people who first lived there looked just like the house—handsome and expensive, but uncomfortable. Dolly said this, or I never should have thought of it, but I could see myself that it was so. There was one thing, however, that certainly looked out of place there, and that was Miggles—dear old homely Miggles!

He was a mongrel dog, yellow and white in color, and large and awkward in build; with a short, blunt muzzle and sad, drooping ears. I did not know, myself, what breed he was the most like, and once, when I asked him, he said that he hadn't the slightest idea, for, really, he had never given it any thought; and then he went on chewing a dirty, greasy bone and waving his great, bushy tail right in my face.

Perhaps I did allude to my own pedigree rather superciliously, but I was younger then than I am now, and poor Miggles forgave

me afterward for any airs which I may have assumed with him at first. There are times when well-mannered dogs, as well as well-mannered people, cannot resist a tendency to brag a little; and I had heard John boast so often of my pure blood that I had begun to be impressed by my own importance. Even Dolly used to say to her visitors that one really could not help noticing the difference between the thoroughbred and common dogs. She said that I was always gentle and kind—so dainty in every way, too, and quite unlike the dirty, rough dogs which one saw running about the streets. But I noticed that she never passed one of those same rough, dirty dogs without a kind word or gentle pat, and I think that she had a warm corner in her heart for even the most disreputable-looking mongrel that ever ran on three legs.

The way that I came to know Miggles was this: John and Dolly went out for a visit just as the family next door were moving into

their new house, and so I was thrown a good deal upon my own society. Nora had a heartless way of shutting me out of doors just at the time when I most wished a nap on my cushion, and I had then either to stay out and roam about alone or to howl and scratch until she opened the door.

After the new neighbors came and I saw Miggles about, to tell the truth, I was ashamed to howl and call his attention to the humiliating way in which Nora treated me; so I stayed about in the yard a good share of the time. Miggles was inclined to be friendly. He had already made quite a collection of bones from about the neighborhood, and these he carefully brought to that part of his yard adjoining ours, and laid them down, looking at me with a friendly wag of his tail, which plainly said, “Come on over.”

I pretended at first not to see him, but it was awfully lonesome; so pretty soon I slowly crawled under the fence to his side,

and stood there, looking, no doubt, very ridiculous, with my tail perked up impertinently and my nose held haughtily in the air—for, as Miggles said to me afterward, if I didn't wish to become acquainted, what did I come over for?

Miggles began to run about and caper clumsily, trying to get me to play. I stood aloof at first, but, finally, I could stand it no longer; so I ran after him and chased him about the yard until he awkwardly ran against me and knocked me over. Then I became quite insulted and made a great show of limping home on three legs. Miggles followed me with profuse apologies, and I saw that he was so penitent for what was no fault of his, but a mere accident, that I began to feel ashamed of myself and went back, and we played together for half an hour, and after that we were always firm friends.

When Dolly came home she was glad to find that I had a new friend. She told John

that the romping would give me just the exercise that I needed, and said that she could see that Miggles was to be trusted.

She used often to call him over the fence and talk to him kindly, and Miggles appreciated this, I can tell you, for his own people paid very little attention to him. They were kind enough, and they never ill-treated him, and they always fed him well ; but they did not act as if he belonged to them, or as though they cared for him at all. It was more as though they just let him stay about ; and Miggles said that it had been just so ever since he was a puppy. They never let him come into the house, and, if he even ventured upon the porches, they ran at him and cried : “ Be off, sir ! ” and it hurt his feelings dreadfully.

And because nobody had seemed to care whether he was clean or dirty, he had grown careless about himself, and used to go about with burrs stuck to his tail and hind legs—he

never noticed them unless they pricked him, he said. Then, too, his feet were quite apt to be muddy. I, myself, had been taught to be very tidy, and it distressed me to see him look so unkempt, so I spoke rather sharply to him about it. He took it very meekly and said that before he knew me he had never cared how he looked, but that he wished that he could present a better appearance on my account. Then he fell to cleaning himself up and to pulling the snarls and burrs out of his tail.

He told me that he envied me for belonging to people who loved me, and that he would do anything for his master if he would only allow him; but that during his whole life he had been misunderstood. And then he said that once, when his master's new hat had blown off, he, Miggles, had run to fetch it; but they all turned in and threw stones at him and called to him to drop it; and since then he had felt perfectly discouraged about being of any use to his master. He began grum-

bling about his name then, which, he said, would answer very well for a kitten, but was absurd for a great creature like him. He told me how, once, he determined not to answer to it, and went and hid under the barn ; but he stayed there a whole day, and nobody ever called him at all. I tried to fancy what it would be like to stay all day hidden and to have no one call me or care what had become of me, and I was very sorry for poor Miggles.

But Miggles was not always depressed like that. There were times when he was positively running over with spirits, and at such times you would not believe that he had ever known a care. And it was in one of these joyous, happy moods that Miggles got me into serious trouble.

You see it was house-cleaning time, and that meant a great deal to me. Miggles said that he wouldn't mind if his family cleaned house every day, for he never stayed inside,

anyhow. He said this with a patronizing air which aggravated me, because I had often heard him complain bitterly because they would not let him in. But I paid no attention to his manner then, for I was taken up with my own anxiety.

Now, of course, no sensible dog is afraid of a wooden pail with a kalsomine brush in it. But when you unexpectedly come across one standing exactly where your cushion usually lies, you cannot help shying a little bit. And then when you encounter a tall step ladder in the accustomed place of the music rack, and you fall over the mop in trying to get out of the way of the painter, who, you can see, hates dogs, by that time, I say, you are in such a state of bewilderment that you simply cannot find the door to get out of the room. So you run confusedly around in a manner which, you realize yourself, looks suspicious. Then the woman who has come in to clean the wood-work, and

who is sure to be a perfect idiot, climbs up on the step-ladder and calls out that you are going mad, and that you snapped at her as you ran by. The painter then throws a brush at you, and the woman screams and calls out that you are foaming at the mouth—as you doubtless are by then. At last you get out somehow—you never know how—and you feel that you never wish to go back into that room again.

Then there are the bare floors! It isn't that you object to bare floors in themselves—it's the coming across them where you do not expect them, and where you are used to treading on soft carpets and rugs. You cannot, for the life of you, help lifting your feet ridiculously high as you cross such a floor; and, although you cannot tell what you fear, you would rather face anything than to go through an empty room. All that was the sort of thing that house-cleaning meant to me, for I remembered my experiences of former years.

XVIII.

Now, there is something very funny about the way a man dresses to do odd jobs about a place. I mean a man who does not do such work for a living. He always attires himself so conspicuously. Why, I have seen John, in the coldest winter, when it has happened that his man was away, and he has had to sift the ashes himself, go to his closet of discarded wearing-apparel and carefully select a straw hat and linen duster, which he would don and wear, perfectly unconscious of anything incongruous to the season. Then, again, I have seen him wear a fur cap and thick coat in midsummer, when he was helping Dolly to weed her flower garden. So when, on this morning, which was very warm and sunny, I saw my master come down in a moth-eaten winter coat and with a

heavy felt hat set back on his head, I knew that there was to be a house-cleaning.

As soon as breakfast was over, John began hauling the furniture about and upsetting things generally—“to get an early start,” Dolly said—and I, meanwhile, stole out and over to Miggles’ house and told him my grievances. It was then that he made the remark which I quoted before—that he didn’t care if his family cleaned house every day. Of course, it was easy enough for him to say that, but after he had dodged a few paint and scrubbing-brushes, he would have changed his mind, I was sure.

Miggles tried to cheer me up a little by showing me a beautiful bone which he had kept buried just long enough to be nice and mellow, but somehow I had no appetite for bones, for I felt extremely low in my mind. Then he told me that he knew where there was a cat that we could have some fun with, but I said that my mistress had punished me

for chasing cats, and I refused to go. Miggles coaxed. He said that nobody would mind *what* we did to this cat, for she was a horrid cat and ate her own kittens, and that her mistress had said that she wished that somebody would kill her. (Somehow Miggles always knew all the news in the neighborhood.)

I began to listen then, and he certainly gave the cat so scandalous a reputation that it almost seemed our duty to put it out of the way at once. "Come on," said Miggles, "I know just where she is, and I'll give you the first chance at her."

So off we went. Miggles led me across an alley and into a neat back yard. "There!" said he, triumphantly, "we have caught her napping." And he nodded his head toward a large gray cat who lay sunning herself upon the steps of the barn. But when did a dog ever really catch a cat napping? Never — unless the cat were old and blind, and this one was

neither. She showed fight, and the tussle was long and fierce. I will spare you the recital of so cruel a thing. I will only state that, by dint of Miggles' encouraging me on, and not without many wounds to myself, I at last killed the cat. Then, as I stood in triumph over the body, proud to have rid the neighborhood of so shameful a pest, Miggles suddenly looked very much concerned. "Vic," said he, ruefully, "we've killed the wrong cat." And then, with drooping ears and tails between our legs, we slunk home, silent and dejected.

I did not dare to go into the house then, even if it were not for house-cleaning, for I knew that Dolly would see the blood and scratches, and know what I had been at. So I crept down in the cellar-way, where I lay until John, coming along with an armful of rugs, which he was carrying nowhere in particular, after the manner of men helping, stumbled over me and fell down the steps.

By the time he had picked himself up, I had hidden behind the coal-bin, and he never knew why he had fallen. In time I dropped asleep in that dirty, uncomfortable place. I was awakened by a shrill voice outside the window. “It was her that done it, *sure*. The little white one with black ears. I seen her do it.” I had no need to hear more. I knew what they were talking about, and I did not come out.

It was dark before they found me, and then it was quite by accident, for John was looking for the tack-hammer, and he wanted to make a thorough search, he said; so he took a candle and went from attic to cellar. He did not find the hammer, but there in the cellar, crouched down behind the coal-bin, he found me — dirty, ashamed, sick and sore. Dolly had called me and had looked everywhere, and finally had given me up in despair. She took me, all dirty and disgraced as I was, into her arms.

“My poor, dear old Vic, it never was your fault at all. It was all that mean mongrel, Miggles. You never shall play with him again,” she said in one breath, as she hugged me delightedly. And I would ten times rather she had whipped me, for poor Miggles was no more at fault than I.

Dolly was as good as her word. She would not let me out of the house if she saw Miggles in sight. I used to sit at the window and watch the poor fellow as he walked back and forth along the fence, looking wistfully toward our house, or sat patiently beside the broken fence where I used to crawl through, as if hoping to see me there again. I did not mind so much for myself, for I had Dolly, and I loved her far better than I could love a dog, but I knew how lonely it was for poor Miggles, whom nobody cared for, and who never had had a sympathetic friend except me.

At last my mistress was touched by Mig-

gles' devotion. Going to the door, she spoke his name, and with one bound he was over the fence. He ran to her feet, lying down and fawning and whining piteously, and licking her hand when she stooped to stroke his head. Dolly called him to follow when she entered the house, but she could not coax him in, for he, poor dog, had been scolded too often for tracking up the porches. So he stood just beside the steps, and my mistress called me out. Oh, how tickled the great, awkward fellow was to see me! He rolled and tumbled about to show his delight, and he rubbed his nose against mine in a sort of caress. Dolly used to let me out to see him afterward sometimes, but she never quite trusted Miggles, and she kept watch of us, lest we do some mischief or other.

It was soon after this that Miggles — poor yellow mongrel that he was — did a noble act which cost him his life. As his master was walking home one night, just as he

neared his own gate, the cry of “Mad dog!” rang out, and a huge, frenzied creature came tearing toward him, with froth dripping from his powerful jaws, which he snapped fiercely, right and left. Before the man was aware of his danger, Miggles had the dog by the throat, and, in spite of its fierce struggles, he held him fast until help came and the dog was shot. Miggles had been bitten in the combat, and it was demanded, for the public safety, that he be shot, too.

My master said that he never saw a more touching sight than Miggles as he crawled to his master’s feet and crouched there, looking imploringly in his face, as though entreating him for protection. Then, when his master could neither save him nor bear to stay and see him killed, Miggles followed his retreating form with his eyes until the shot rang out which pierced as faithful a heart as ever beat.

And when Miggles was dead his master had him buried at the foot of the garden, and

he put over his grave a decent wooden slab with the dog's name upon it. He took all his friends around to see it, and said words of praise for the poor fellow which, had they been said to him in his lifetime, would have changed his forlorn lot into that of the proudest dog in the world.

And a queer thing happened soon after. Miggles' master had had some trouble with his coachman, and he dismissed the man in anger. The next day there appeared below the dog's name, painted in uneven letters, an inscription which was meant not so much to honor Miggles as to show contempt for his master, for it intimated that the dog was the better man of the two. Strange to say, his master never had it painted out. He sold the place not long after, and moved away, and the house has changed hands twice since then. I doubt if the present owner has ever seen the grave, which is now all grown over with vines

and bushes, so that the head-board is quite hidden, except to one familiar with the place.

It is still there, however, for I saw it to-day. I had to scratch away the hop-vines before I could make out all the lettering, but it is plain enough when you have once found it:

MIGGLES.

HE WAS MORE OF A MAN THAN HIS MASTER.



XIX.

LIFE has run along very comfortably and happily for us all since then, but I declare it makes me feel old when I think of Miggles and how long ago that all was.

Of course, nine years is not a remarkably great age for a dog, but it is about all that we can reasonably expect, and a good deal more than we can be sure of.

I am certainly getting stiff at the knees, and I do not take so kindly to exercise as I used to, and Dolly tells me that I am too lazy and fat for any use. It is true that I do stick pretty close to the grate-fire now, but it is winter, and I believe that I must feel the cold more than I ever did before. When Dolly goes out I usually follow, for, somehow, I cannot bear to lose sight of her; but I get

quite wheezy and out of breath when I run far.

The other day John pulled out one of my teeth because it had become so loose. Dolly watched him, and she winced as though it had hurt her, although I scarcely felt it at all. John laughed at her, and then she said that it wasn't so much because she thought that it would hurt me, but that she could not help remembering when that tooth had come through, and how interested she had been in watching for it.

And then she put her arms about his neck and said: “You were my old Cheap John then, you know, and nothing ever touches me like the memory of those dear old shabby times when we never had enough chairs in the dining-room, and your clothes were always shiny at the seams.”

I think that my master was moved by the remembrance, too, for his eyes looked suspiciously bright as he drew Dolly down on

his knee and kissed her. Dolly reached her hand out for me. "Vic, too, dear, for she was part of it all," she said, softly. Then master lifted me up and set me on his other knee, and he folded his arms close about us both, as he answered: "Yes, Dolly — Vic, too."



